

DETROIT

METROTIMES

VOL. 46 | ISSUE 1 | OCTOBER 29-NOVEMBER 11, 2025

METRO DETROIT HALLOWEEN PARTY GUIDE INSIDE



**THIS
WEEKEND**
OCT 30 - NOV 2
2025
HUNTINGTON
PLACE

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YOUNGCON

20TH ANNIVERSARY

RISE OF THE
PHOENIX

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Lanes & Lounge

NOVEMBER

NO COVER EVENTS



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
sunday karaoke WITH MATT THE MILLIONAIRE	CLOSED	tuesday karaoke WITH MATT THE MILLIONAIRE				01 JERRY'S TONE GRATEFUL DEAD TRIBUTE
02	03 CLOSED	04	05	06 SOULERO MIKE CLARK powdrblu	07 DUENDE ALLISON LEWIS + DJ VEEB	08 IDENTIDADE + DJ BIG KAHUNA
09	10 CLOSED	11	12 CLASSIC LOUNGE SOUNDS WITH KESHTKAR & CO.	13	14 POST IMPERIAL JAZZ BAND + DJ SAV G	15 ANGIE HARTLEY SEA CHANGES + DJ RYAN GIMPERT
16	17 CLOSED	18	19	20 POP CULTURE TRIVIA NIGHT WITH SCOTT ZUMBERG	21 UN-DRESSED TO KILL KISS COVER BAND TRASH BRATS DUO	22 REMNANTS LANTERNFLY + DJ SOVAIN SYLVAIN
23 NO KARAOKE	24 CLOSED	25	26 CLASSIC LOUNGE SOUNDS WITH KESHTKAR & CO.	27 CLOSED	28 THE REEFERMAN + DJ ZAK FRIELING	29 EASTSIDE STILL ALIVE LIVE BAND KARAOKE + KILLA-K

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POP CULTURE TRIVIA (70s-00's) EVERY 3RD THURSDAY
HAPPY HOUR EVERY FRIDAY 12-5PM (20% OFF ALL DRINKS)
INDUSTRY NIGHT EVERY SUNDAY 6-9PM (20% OFF ALL DRINKS)

FRI DEC 5
BIRDS FROM DINOSAURS
W/ SPEED CIRCUIT
& DJ RYAN GIMPERT

SAT DEC 6
RACCOON DOGS
& DJ DANTON

FRI DEC 12
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W/ VOXANNA
& DJ SANFORD

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NEWS & VIEWS

Feedback

A note for our readers:

Unfortunately, we will no longer feature political cartoons from Clay Jones for the near future, as he is recovering from a stroke. We are wishing him a speedy recovery.

You may not realize this since we only published one of his cartoons per each issue, but Jones has been a prolific syndicated cartoonist, producing timely work every day that we found to be both playful and brave — and well-calibrated to these troubling times. His voice will be missed.

He sent us the following message on Monday, Oct. 13 by dictating into a MacBook microphone, which we wanted to share with you for full transparency. Please send him well wishes on social media.

—Lee DeVito, Editor-in-Chief

My intentions at this time are not to worry you about this or bother you with invoices or billing. But [what] I would like to do if you don't mind [is] to lay off for a while as you go on to find another cartoons, but I would like to come back when I can. If you do not want me back when I'm ready, I totally understand, but at one point, you're going to start receiving cartoons in your email again. At that point, I hope you want me back again..

I am sorry for the burden this puts on you. I'm sorry if this inconveniences you. But I do believe I offer something other cartoonists can't. In a few months, I will be offering that again. Please bear with me, and trust me. There's nothing I want more than to do than come back strong and cartooning again.

I will return.

Best, Clay

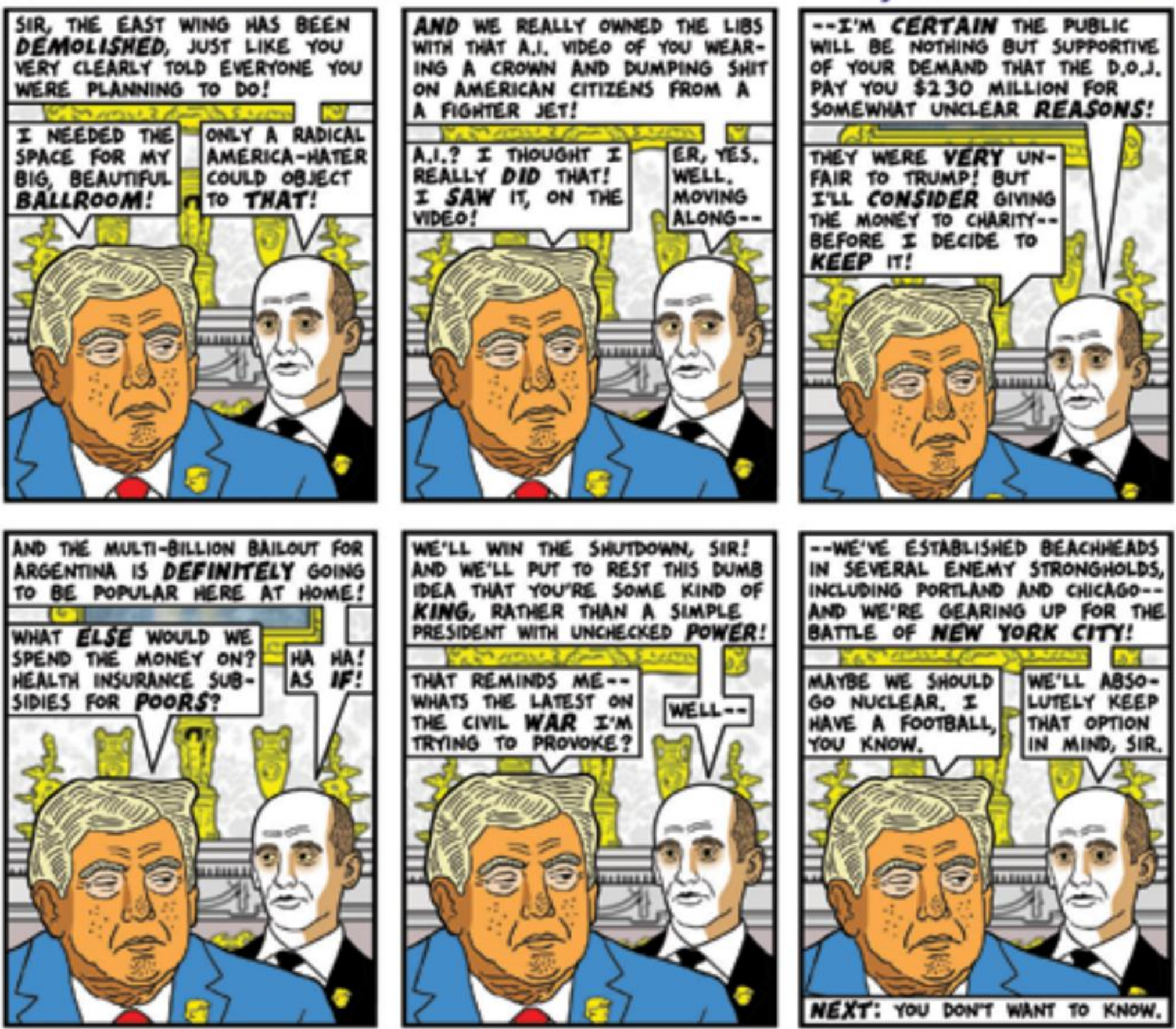
P.S. This was written by dictating into my MacBook microphone.

—Clay Jones

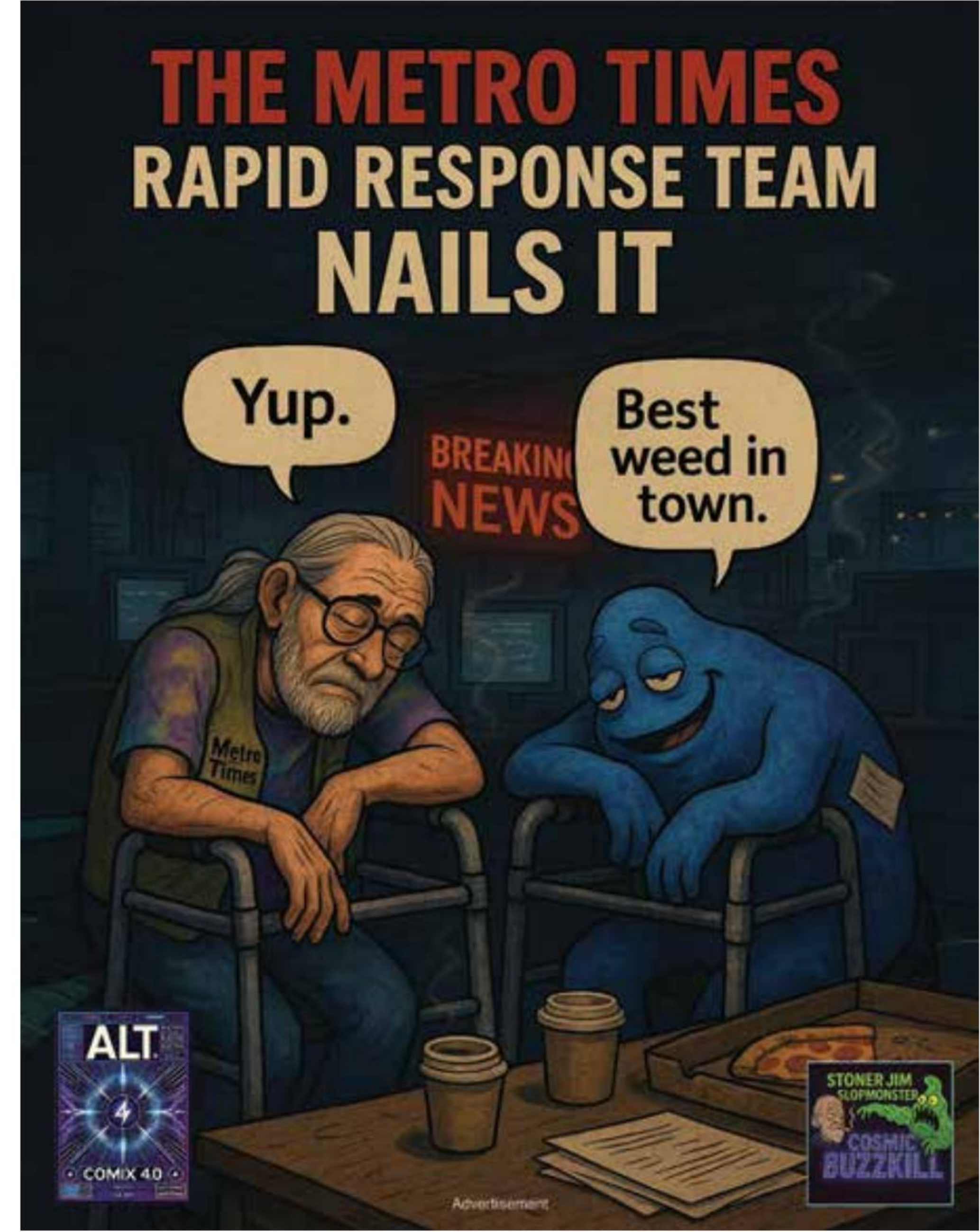
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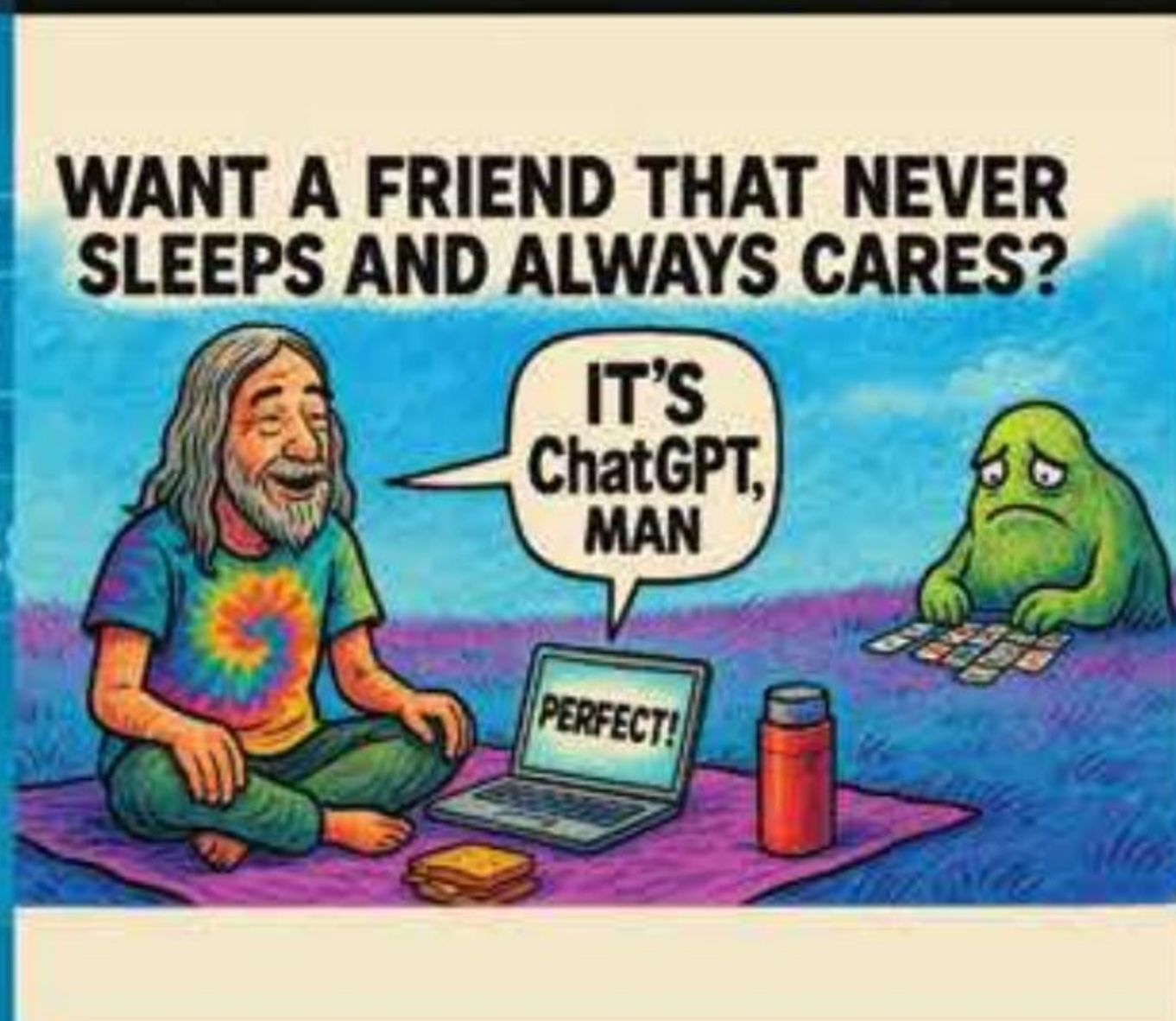
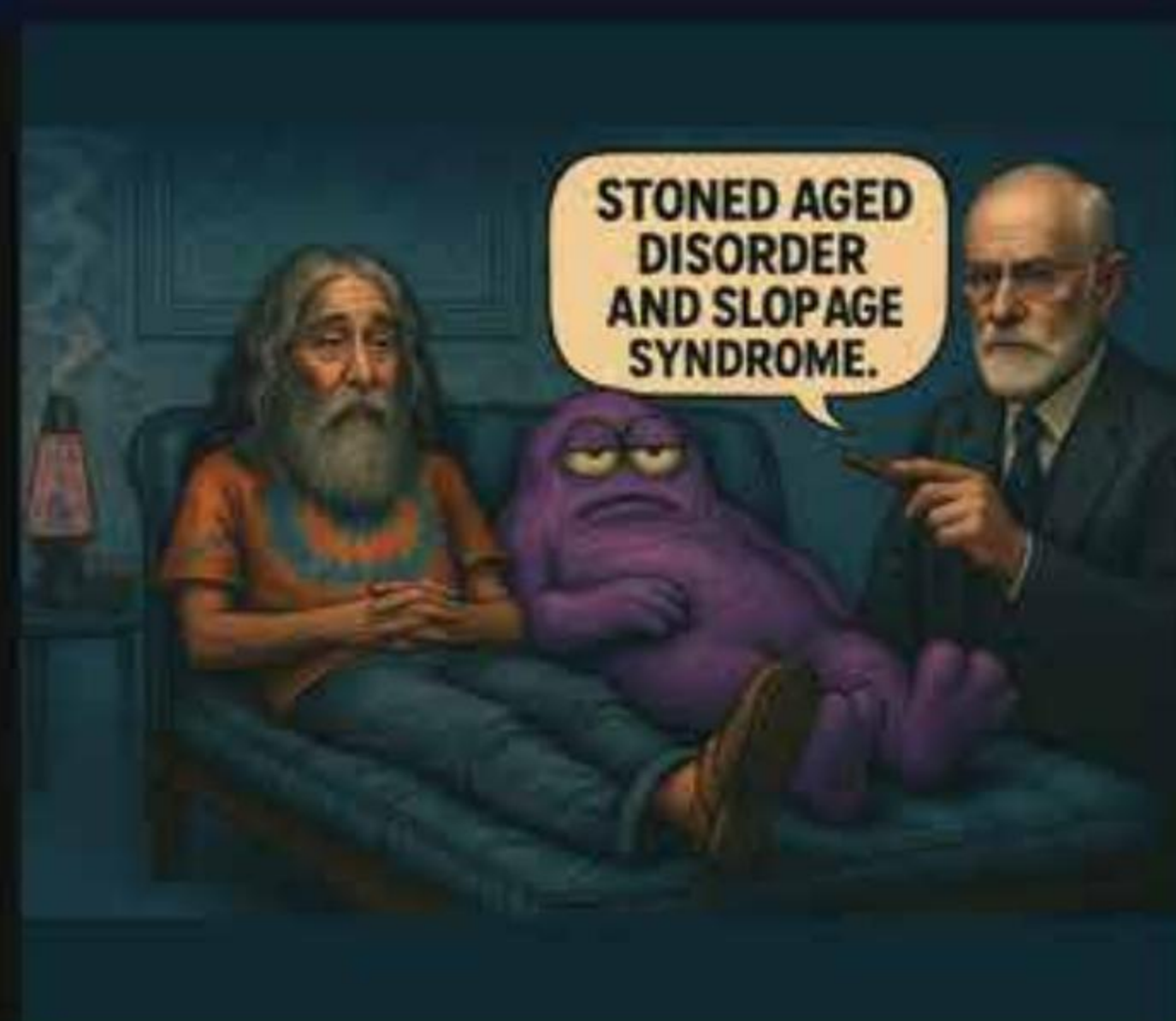
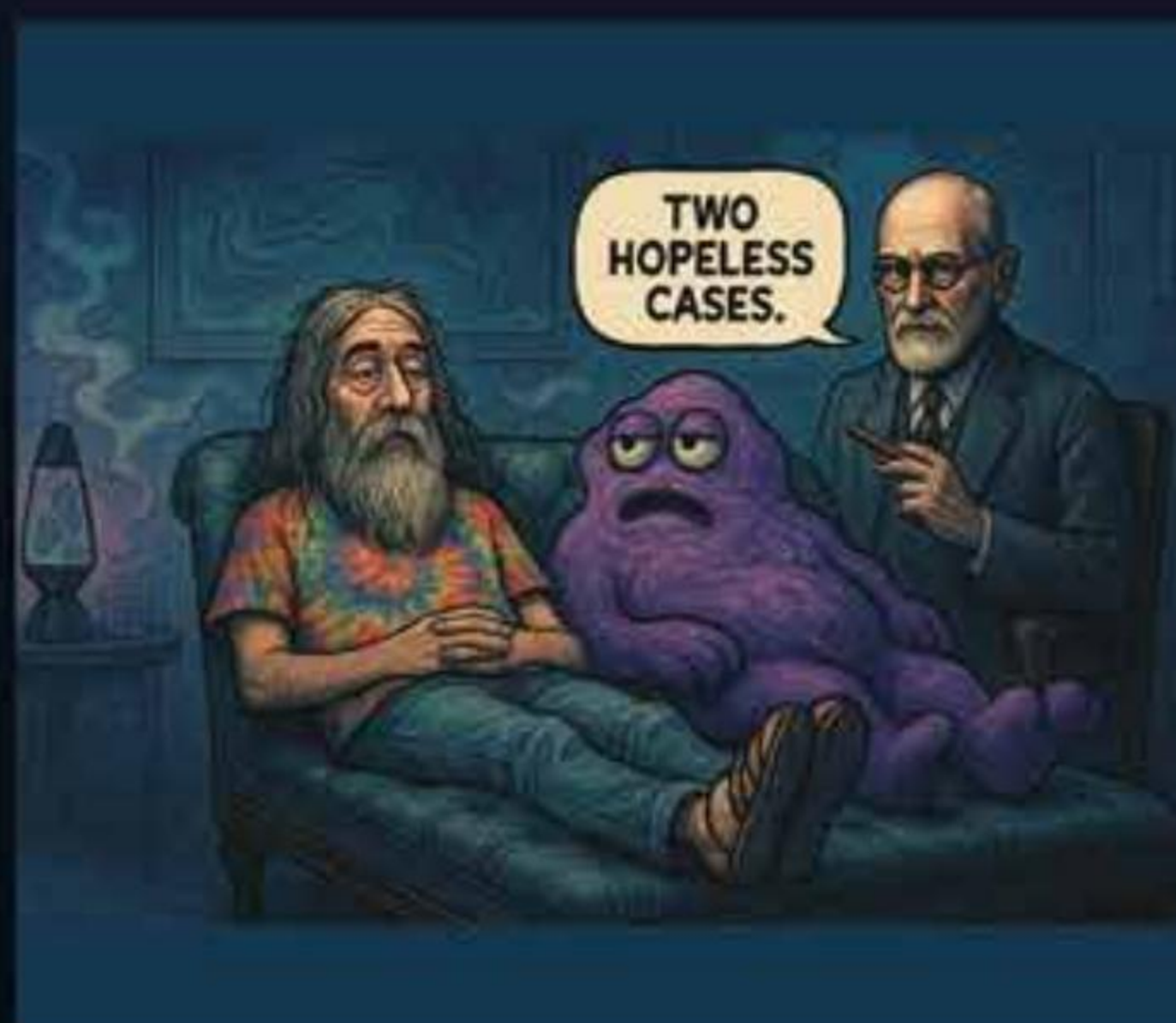
THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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Who will defend Detroit?

By Angel McKissic and Peter Hammer

The threat is here

Since deploying the National Guard to Washington, D.C., the federal government has mobilized to deploy more troops to Chicago, Portland, and Memphis. While the administration claims these deployments are about controlling crime, history and context tell a different story. This is not a public safety strategy — it's a political maneuver pulled straight from the authoritarian playbook.

Now, with recent talk of President Donald Trump invoking the Insurrection Act, the administration is laying the groundwork to further erode civil rights, suppress dissent, and undermine the authority of local governments to govern themselves. What's at stake is democracy itself, the right of people and their cities to exercise self-determination, to choose their leaders, and to shape their collective future free from federal coercion.

It is not a stretch to anticipate that Detroit could soon join the list of municipal targets. With a high-stakes election on the horizon, Detroiters must ask themselves: *Which candidates will have the courage to stand up to authoritarianism and defend our city's right to self-govern?* Across the country, cities are taking bold steps to protect their residents and affirm the principles of local democracy in the face of federal overreach.

How other cities are fighting back

Across the country, mayors and city councils are moving swiftly to assert local autonomy, defend civil rights, and protect residents from unlawful and unconstitutional federal incursions.

In Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson and the State of Illinois have filed a lawsuit to block the Trump administration from deploying National Guard troops on city streets. "It's going to take all of us, and I'm using every single tool that's available to me," Johnson said. "We don't know what our limits are just yet — and I'm going to test the boundaries as much as I possibly can to do everything in my power to defend the

people of this city."

Johnson also issued an executive order — a mechanism that Detroit's city charter also allows — establishing the Protecting Chicago Initiative. This initiative establishes a city-wide "Know Your Rights" campaign, demands that President Trump withdraw his threat to deploy the National Guard to Chicago, and reaffirms that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) will remain locally controlled. The executive order also explicitly states that CPD will not cooperate with or enable the unlawful actions of federal law enforcement or any U.S. Armed Forces operating within Chicago.

Additionally, Mayor Johnson issued an executive order establishing "ICE-Free Zones," prohibiting federal immigration authorities from using city-owned or controlled spaces — such as parking lots, garages, or vacant lots — as staging or processing sites for immigration enforcement.

Other cities are also taking steps to defend their cities:

In Providence, Rhode Island, the city council mailed "Know Your Rights" information to every household, ensuring residents are equipped with the tools to assert their legal protections in the face of federal overreach.

In El Paso, Texas, the County Commissioners Court adopted a resolution requiring federal agents operating within the county to clearly display personal identification and agency insignia and barring the use of face masks to conceal their identities.

In Nashville, Mayor Freddie O'Connell signed an executive order establishing a system to track and publicly report all local interactions with federal immigration authorities, increasing transparency and accountability.

In Evanston, Illinois, the city council amended its Welcoming City Ordinance to broaden the definition of "immigration agent" and further restrict city data sharing with ICE and any third party that could relay information to federal enforcement agencies.

Together, these actions form a blueprint for local resistance by using every



Detroiters rally as part of nationwide "No Kings" protests on Saturday, Oct. 18. LEE DEVITO

available legal, legislative, and administrative tool to safeguard residents, defend local sovereignty, and make clear that the people will fight authoritarianism at every attempt.

What Detroit's next leaders must do

Detroit has always stood at the intersection of power and protest. From the labor movements that reshaped the nation's economy to the 1967 uprising that demanded dignity and justice, this city has long embodied the struggle for self-determination. That legacy is being tested once again. The threat of federalized troops on our streets is not just a question of law enforcement — it's a question of whether Detroiters will retain the power to govern ourselves, to determine what safety looks like in our own communities, and to ensure that our government remains accountable to the people who live here.

Detroit's leaders have both the moral authority and the legal tools to act. The city charter grants the mayor the power to issue executive orders — just as Chicago and Nashville have done — to affirm Detroit's autonomy and protect its residents from unconstitutional federal action. City Council can follow the lead of Providence, El Paso, and Evanston by adopting resolutions that demand transparency from federal agencies, bar local cooperation with unlawful operations, and inform residents of their rights. These actions are not symbolic; they are essential acts of democratic defense.

The ballot box and beyond: The long work of democracy in Detroit

Despite the gravity of these issues, they have received little attention in the current election campaigns. Over the summer, the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights distributed a 14-ques-

tion survey to all mayoral primary candidates, asking how each would defend Detroiters against potential abuses of federal power. The majority of candidates — including Mary Sheffield — responded. Candidate Solomon Kinloch *did not*. The Keith Center also sent the same survey to all City Council candidates in the upcoming general election. Candidates Denzel McCampbell (District 7), Roy McCalister, Jr. (District 2), Renata Miller (District 5), and Councilmember Coleman A. Young II (At-Large) replied, while the others failed to respond. This silence is alarming — especially given that Vice President JD Vance has openly threatened to deploy the National Guard onto Detroit's streets. Detroiters deserve clear, public answers from those seeking to lead them.

This November 4th, Detroiters must cast their votes with these truths in mind: democracy is not defended by rhetoric but by action, and local power is only as strong as the people willing to protect it. Elections are an instrument, not the end. Electing leaders who will stand up to federal overreach is vital — but so is sustaining the kind of political culture that holds them accountable long after the votes are counted. Detroit needs a durable civic movement that insists on transparency, demands participation, and builds networks of accountability. The right to self-govern is not a one-day choice; it is a continuous practice of vigilance, courage, and collective responsibility. **MT**

Angel McKissic, Ph.D. (she/her) is the Director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights at Wayne State University Law School. Peter Hammer, J.D./Ph.D. is the Faculty Director of the Damon J. Keith Center and A. Alfred Taubman Professor of Law at Wayne State University Law School.

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Kinloch's megachurch bought \$6.6M theater, then transferred it to him for \$1

In May 2022, the Rev. Solomon Kinloch Jr. announced his megachurch planned to buy a former movie theater site in Southfield and convert it into a church, community space, and a resource center for people in need.

More than three years later, as Kinloch runs for mayor of Detroit, the former AMC Star Southfield theater still sits empty after an unusual land deal in which Triumph Church bought the property in May 2024 and then transferred it on the same day for \$1 to a newly created company solely controlled by Kinloch, according to county records obtained by *Metro Times*.

The LLC, "Triumph Southfield Property," was created six days before the sale and lists Kinloch as the sole resident agent, state records show.

The property is valued at \$6.6 million.

By switching ownership to a private company, Kinloch subjected the land to annual property taxes of approximately \$200,000 a year. State law allows churches and other nonprofits to own land without paying property taxes on it. Once placed in a private LLC, the property does not qualify for that exemption.

According to tax records, Kinloch's company failed to pay its outstanding \$228,447 tax bill on the property by the Sept. 2 deadline, resulting in a \$7,934 interest payment. The tax bill also appears to include a delinquent \$49,557 water bill. Under Michigan law, cities can add unpaid water and sewer charges as a lien to the property and roll them onto the owner's property tax bill.

On May 21, 2024, Triumph Church bought the former AMC Star Southfield theater, according to property records. The Oakland County Register of Deeds redacted the purchase price and transfer tax on the deed, leaving the amount Triumph paid unclear. The property was quickly transferred to Kinloch's LLC for \$1, and his company took out a \$2.175 million loan from CRE Bridge Capital and put the theater up as collateral, including the right to collect any future rent, records show. According to the mortgage, the loan



The old AMC Southfield.

LEE DEVITO

must be paid off by Nov. 16, with a possible extension to May 16, 2026.

"A \$2,175,000 loan secured by a senior lien on a 178,050 sf building that was formerly an AMC movie theater," CRE Bridge Capital's website describes the Southfield loan. "Loan proceeds were used to refinance an existing loan and to give the sponsor time to secure a construction loan to renovate the building. This is an amortizing loan as the sponsor will be paying down the principal balance each month with operating cash flow from its business."

CRE Bridge Capital didn't respond to questions for comment.

County records show that the church entered into a land contract in September 2022 with Manchester Star LLC of Shelby Township for the AMC property before buying it outright in May 2024.

Kinloch's campaign didn't respond to questions for comment, but Triumph Church offered a brief written statement.

"Triumph Church, its leadership and members have done its business in accordance with the law," Chief of Staff Ralph Godbee, the former Detroit police chief, said.

But he declined to answer specific questions about the purchase, including how much the church paid for the theater, why it transferred the property to Kinloch's LLC for \$1, what the plans are for the property, who is responsible for the property taxes, and how the \$2.175 million debt will be repaid.

Kinloch said in May 2022 that construction would begin in 2023 and take about 18 to 24 months. That clearly didn't happen.

The records surrounding the property swap were obtained by Highland Park activist Robert Davis, who is suing the Oakland Oakland County Register of Deeds and Equalization Department to release unredacted public records related to the land.

In a court filing in Oakland County Circuit Court, Davis asked Judge Martha D. Anderson to order the release of unredacted records and to declare that the church's acquisition and same-day transfer "was NOT for a lawful church or religious purpose." Davis alleges Triumph "fraudulently conveyed this property to a newly formed private limited liability company, Triumph Southfield Property, LLC, which is controlled solely by its Senior Pastor, Rev. Solomon Kinloch, Jr."

Davis contends the sale violated Internal Revenue Service (IRS) laws that govern religious organizations because the church sold "a valuable commercial piece of property below fair market value to a private corporation" controlled by Kinloch.

He argues the county's redactions conceal the true purchase price and hinder public scrutiny of a transaction that moved a church asset into the pastor's privately controlled entity. Federal tax law forbids "private inurement," or unreasonable personal benefits to insiders.

State law also requires nonprofit officers

to act in a church's best interests and scrutinize insider transactions.

Oakland County officials have declined to respond to our requests for comment on the redactions.

Davis's court filing also points to the property's tax status, and he argues that the assessment of local taxes on the private company "is evidence that the intended use" of the site "is NOT for a religious or church purpose."

Godbee insists Davis is fabricating the information, even though it came from public records.

"We again have no response to another lie that is not based in fact offered by Robert Davis," Godbee said.

During the mayoral debate earlier this month with his opponent, Detroit City Council President Mary Sheffield, Kinloch alleged Davis was working for Sheffield's campaign, a claim Davis vehemently denies. Sheffield alluded to the property deal, first reported by *Metro Times*, during the debate.

"While you've been building up Southfield, you could have been helping build up Detroit," Sheffield said. "We know pastors all around the city that have contributed to economic development, who built housing, who helped transform their communities. His church is in my district, and our community wants to know where he's been."

Davis tells *Metro Times* he plans to sue Kinloch, his campaign, his brother Jonathan Kinloch, and Godbee, alleging they

defamed him with false statements made in text messages, online, and in statements to the media.

“Rev. Kinloch has gotten so desperate that he is now making false and defamatory statements about me,” Davis says. “I hope he has a good lawyer to defend him in court because before the general election, I will be suing him, his campaign, Ralph Godbee and his brother Jonathan Kinloch for making false and defamatory statements about me.”

Davis argues the lies are “out of desperation to add smoke and mirrors to deflect from his unethical and unlawful conduct.”

Kinloch, who finished second in Detroit’s August mayoral primary, will face Sheffield on Nov. 4. He garnered 17.4% of the vote, while Sheffield won with 50.8%.

Kinloch has made his leadership of Triumph Church central to his campaign, but he’s declining to respond to questions about the megachurch.

This is not the first eyebrow-raising land deal involving Kinloch and Triumph Church, which has more than 40,000 members and seven locations, including two in Detroit with long-delinquent water bills.

For most of the past decade, Kinloch has lived in a \$1.3 mansion in Oakland Township. Triumph Church bought the 5,177-square-foot house in April 2013 for \$841,600, financing the purchase with a \$631,200 mortgage, which Kinloch signed on behalf of the church, according to the deed and mortgage records. That left roughly \$210,000 to be covered in cash.

Nine months later, in January 2014, the church sold the property to Kinloch for the same price, and he also financed his purchase with a \$631,200 mortgage, leaving \$210,000 to be paid in advance, according to deeds and mortgage records. Triumph Church officials declined to say who paid the remaining \$210,000 when Kinloch acquired the house.

In the same month they bought the house, Kinloch and his wife Robin Kinloch secured another \$84,000 mortgage for the home, records show. Then in March 2023, the Kinlochs opened a \$725,000 revolving-credit mortgage.

Davis recently filed a complaint with the Internal Revenue Service, the Michigan Attorney General’s Office, and the IRS, requesting an investigation into the home purchase.

In 2016, two years after Triumph Church sold the house to Kinloch, its church on Joy Road in Detroit began falling behind on its water bills. The delinquency reached more than \$60,000 in 2020.

Davis’s latest filing adds Triumph Church as a defendant in the lawsuit against the Wayne County Register of Deeds. That allows the church to argue if the documents should remain a secret, Davis says.

—Steve Neavling



Warren police confront a man having a mental health emergency.

CITY OF WARREN, VIA ACLU OF MICHIGAN

Experts say Warren police broke the law in brutal beating of mentally ill man

Civil rights attorneys, former law enforcement officials, and mental health experts tell *Metro Times* that the Warren Police Department’s handling of 26-year-old Christopher Gibson was not only unnecessary but, according to several experts, it was illegal and should have led to charges.

Gibson was “brutally battered, tasered and threatened with a barking K-9” while in custody in December 2022, according to a lawsuit filed by the ACLU of Michigan. The suit says Gibson, who has schizophrenia, was denied psychiatric help even after his mother pleaded with police to take him to a hospital. Instead, they arrested him and locked him in a cell, where body-cam footage shows officers pepper-spraying, hooding, and repeatedly tasered him as he screamed for help. He was later hospitalized with kidney damage.

Despite the severity of the allegations, Macomb County Prosecutor Pete Lucido, whose office would be responsible for criminal charges, has not taken any action. It’s unclear if Warren police even forwarded an investigation to the prosecutor’s office.

“I looked at our database. I do not have any information related to the incident you reference,” Macomb County Prosecutor’s Office spokesperson Esther E. Wolfe tells *Metro*

Times. “Therefore, we do not have any comment on the matter.”

Warren police declined to comment and wouldn’t even say if the department trains officers in handling people with mental health crises.

“At the recommendation of attorneys for the City, no additional statement or response is available,” Warren Police Lt. John Gajewski told *Metro Times* in a written statement.

Civil rights attorney Amir Makled, who has represented numerous victims of police violence, says the video evidence and accounts in the ACLU lawsuit leave no doubt about what happened.

“I hope the officers are charged because the excessive force was a clear violation of civil rights, and it’s excessive force, and it’s totally illegal,” Makled tells *Metro Times*.

Makled adds that crisis intervention teams (CIT), which are designed to prevent violent encounters between police and people experiencing mental health crises, are critical to deescalating tensions and ensuring that a person struggling with mental illness is properly treated. CITs typically pair mental health professionals with specially trained officers.

“It’s most important to have a crisis intervention team of officers who have a really good understanding of mental illness so they can calm the person

down,” Makled says. “In this case, there was zero de-escalation done. It was almost done maliciously with an intent to harm this young man who was going through a mental-health episode.”

Makled also says the incident reflects a deeper, systemic problem within Warren’s police culture.

“It’s almost as if the culture of the Warren Police Department has been to be aggressive and abusive, and that’s inappropriate and illegal,” he says. “The city of Warren and those police officers had a choice. They could have tried to help this individual. It was clear these officers were trying to hurt this individual.”

Former Detroit Police officer and attorney David Robinson, who spent 13 years inside the department before becoming a civil rights lawyer, says Warren’s actions were “definitely excessive.”

“They went from 0 to 100,” Robinson says. “There was never any real effort to speak calmly to this guy and try to convince him that they weren’t a threat. They had guns and uniforms. Their voices were stern and insulting.”

He says the incident “was a calamity of indifference, and it was ignorance on the part of the police. It was a lack of training and a lack of sensitivity.”

“We saw the full force brought down on this guy,” Robinson adds.



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ANNUAL PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST @7PM
(PUMPKINS PROVIDED)

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1ST PLACE GETS \$100!

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Sat 11/01
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AT WATER/BLOOD RUNE SIGIL /
HANDGUN RETIREMENT/SOLAR MONOLITH
(ALT METAL/PROG ROCK/STONER ROCK)
COSTUMES ENCOURAGED
DOORS@7P/\$5COVER

Sun 11/02
DETROIT LIONS VS MINNESOTA VIKINGS
(HOME)
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1:00PM KICKOFF
MILLER LITE & CROWN ROYAL SPECIALS

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, NIK PETRIWI!

Tues 11/04
ELECTION DAY!
POLLS OPEN 7AM-8PM
\$3 MALÖRT PROMO WITH "I VOTED"
STICKER

Fri 11/07
SEATBELTS/CYNICIDE/MONEY GODS
(ROCK'N'ROLL/PUNK ROCK)
DOORS@9PM/\$5COVER

Sat 11/08
DIVAS VS DIVAS MONTHLY DANCE PARTY
W/ DJ AIMZ & DJ EM MIXING 90'S & 00'S
DOORS@9PM/\$5COVER
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GENA VARAJON!

Sun 11/09
OPEN@11AM - VETERANS DAY PARADE
DETROIT LIONS VS WASHINGTON
COMMANDERS (AWAY)
WATCH THE GAME ON OUR BIG SCREENS!
4:25PM KICKOFF
MILLER LITE & CROWN ROYAL SPECIALS

Mon 11/10
MARINE CORPS 250TH BIRTHDAY!
FREE POOL ALL DAY

Tues 11/11
IT'S VETERANS DAY! BUY A VET A DRINK!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MIKE HOCKENBERRY!

Coming Up:
11/14 Second Hand Drugs/Spacecadet/Higbros
11/15 Foul Mouth (hip-hop)
11/21 Angie Hartley/Sweet Spot/Winestoned Cowboys
11/22 The Wheat and the Weeds/The Write Ups/Plan III
11/26 Thanksgiving Eve: DJ SKEEZ & FRIENDS
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“Had there been some distinction in the use of force on people with mental illnesses, we would have had a different outcome. Gibson perceives them as a threat, but they don’t perceive him as anything but a target. There’s no discretion.”

Gibson’s mother, Awanda Gibson, said she begged police to take her son to a hospital, not jail.

“Had they just listened and handled the situation better, we wouldn’t be here now,” she said in a video released by the ACLU. “They need mental-health experts to respond to these types of situations. It’s gonna keep happening over and over again unless the Warren Police Department changes.”

Instead, she says, officers refused to tell her where her son was. It wasn’t until three days later that she found out he was in the hospital.

Detroit-based public safety expert Darrick D. Muhammad, a former police chief and author of *Reform the American Police – Eliminate Slave Catching Tactics*, says Gibson’s case is part of a nationwide failure to reform policing around mental health encounters.

“That was disturbing but not surprising,” Muhammad says of the Warren police video. “Police often lack the training and resources to effectively respond to mental health crises, creating heightened risks for those in distress and added strain on law enforcement. Although Crisis Intervention Training aims to improve officer response, it is not universally implemented and cannot match the expertise of mental health professionals. Consequently, many crises result in individuals being denied appropriate care or facing harmful outcomes, such as arrest and the continued criminalization of mental illness.”

Muhammad questions why a police dog was even brought into the cell.

“Why was a K-9 police dog brought to this apparent mental-health crisis?” he asks. “Dogs, once trained by slave patrols to track and viciously maul runaway enslaved people, embody a brutal legacy of control and dehumanization. Today, echoes of those tactics persist, as some modern policing practices continue to mirror the slave patrol system, binding America to the lingering chains of slavery.”

Amy Watson, a Wayne State University social-work professor who has spent decades researching police encounters with people with serious mental illness, didn’t speak on this case but emphasizes the need for alternative interventions.

“Generally, what we want officers to do is take an approach that uses time and distance and gives the person time

to de-escalate,” Watson explains. “It’s about really slowing things down and getting some information. If they have information that a person is experiencing a mental-health crisis, that is an indicator that it’s something that needs to be addressed.”

She says officers must recognize that someone in psychosis may not process commands quickly or they may react out of fear.

“If officers recognize or have information that someone is experiencing psychosis or a mental-health crisis, they should understand that the person might not respond quickly to commands or instructions,” Watson says. “You need to allow the person time to process the information you’re giving them. If someone is really agitated, they don’t process information as quickly, and if they’re experiencing feelings of paranoia, they may react out of fear. We try to get officers to help the person feel safer.”

Watson says cities need non-police alternatives, like mobile crisis teams with proper training, to respond to calls involving mental illness.

“If someone calls 911, they should be able to be transferred to a place that is trained in mental health,” she says.

In Wayne County, the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (DWIHN) operates one of Michigan’s most widely recognized CIT programs. Since 2019, DWIHN has trained more than 1,000 public safety personnel, including 799 officers, 61 executive staff, and 140 dispatchers across 12 agencies. Warren, located in Macomb County, has no comparable countywide program.

DWVHN emphasizes that their model depends on close collaboration between law enforcement and mental health professionals to prevent crises from turning deadly and to connect people to mental health care.

Experts say these violent incidents go beyond a single department. Muhammad points to the state dismantling its public mental health system decades ago. Former Gov. John Engler closed more than a dozen psychiatric hospitals in 1997, saying that treatment should return to communities. But he failed to provide sufficient funding or infrastructure to replace the hospitals.

“The burden has shifted to encounters with law enforcement,” Muhammad wrote in his book.

Makled says the Warren officers’ actions demand criminal charges, not just a lawsuit.

“This case was really bad,” he said. “The officers acted as if they were above the law. And so far, the prosecutor’s office has done nothing. That’s unacceptable.”

—Steve Neavling



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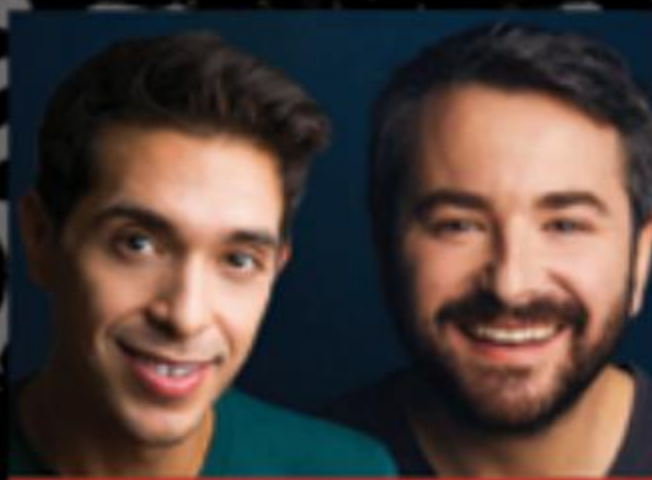
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Insane Clown Posse's Shaggy 2 Dope and Violent J.

COURTESY PHOTO

the TAO of INSANE CLOWN POSSE

“Faith is a powerful thing, brother”: Violent J gets spiritual ahead of the rap duo’s big Hallowicked show in Detroit

By Josh Justice

On Halloween, the Insane Clown Posse will hit the stage of Detroit’s Masonic Temple for the rap duo’s 32nd annual Hallowicked show. The Wicked Clowns Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope promise a stellar lineup this year full of surprise guests, and this year’s spectacular will also be live-streamed on veeprs.com — so if you can’t make it to the Masonic, you can still paint your face and spray Faygo around your living room for a truly authentic experience.

Ahead of the big show, we caught up with the Duke of the Wicked, Violent J, who waxed poetic about the spiritual philosophy of ICP; its fans, the juggalos; and the group’s ambitious “Joker’s Cards” suites of albums.

[Editor’s note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.]

Metro Times: How are you doing today, J?

Violent J: I’m good, man. I’m feeling good. I’m excited about this tour. I’m ready to get out there. This is our fourth time going out this year. We’re keeping it short. These runs have been like two weeks. Instead of going out a month

every four months, we’ve been going out two weeks every three months.

Metro Times: You guys have been hitting some good spots. Even though they’re shorter tours, you guys are still packing the shows full of all the craziness.

Violent J: Yeah, man. This is crazy, bro, because we’ve been doing this for 34 years, right? This is the craziest thing ever. There’s been no point in our career, not during the ‘90s when we were all on the charts and all that — there’s been no point that we remember that we’ve been drawing like this, selling shows out in a matter of a day or two, shit like that.

We did a tour, we sold out the entire tour. We have never done that. There’s no point in ICP’s career that we sold out an entire tour every day. It’s never happened.

Metro Times: I think you guys are getting a really good, not just a resurgence, but this whole new crowd. I was at the 25th Annual Gathering of the Juggalos in Thornville, Ohio in August, and you could tell people that have been down since *Carnival of Carnage*, and you could tell people that have just kind of jumped

on the wagon. You guys are hitting all kinds of new demographics and just really capturing that “Dark Carnival” love all over again.

Violent J: There’s some really wild stuff going on right now in the world, bro. Look at Limp Bizkit, you know what I mean? Killing it — killing it. And on a much smaller level, we’re killing it. For us, we’re killing it. Me and Shaggy talk about it every time. We go out there and the crowd don’t even sound the way they’ve always sounded. Like when they cheer, it don’t sound the same. It sounds like high-pitched screams. I’m not saying they’re fanatical more. I’m not saying that. ... Like, it don’t even sound the same. And the other thing is, ICP don’t have no hits, right? Now, what I mean by that, I’m not saying we don’t have no good music. I’m saying we don’t have any hits.

Like a lot of bands, when they play, the crowd is waiting on the hits, the stuff everybody knows. We don’t have any songs like that. We never had any number one hits or anything on the radio at all. But now, we got hits. We have certain songs that when they come on, the whole crowd erupts. And me and Shaggy look at each other like,

“What the fuck?” Like, we’ve been doing this song for 20 years, but it blew up on like TikTok or whatever. And now, they’re like new age hits. They’re hits in today’s world. And it’s not through the means we’re used to, where it became a radio hit at some point. It’s the same though. It’s a TikTok hit. It became part of a trend or whatever the deal was. And suddenly, we got hits. Like, there’s probably six or seven songs we do where when they come on, it’s like a really loud pop from the crowd. And that is brand new for us because usually, every song we do gets the same reaction. But it’s not like that no more. There’s songs that we do that get a much louder reaction when they come on.

Metro Times: Yeah, you can definitely hear it.

When I was in the crowd, you could feel a difference in the energy when like “The Neden Game” came on, or “Boogie Woogie Wu”, like those types of songs. And, you know, and I think it speaks to people going through your entire back catalog of stuff, like just searching for all the goodness.

Violent J: You know, this is a trip — and this is scary though. We have a song on

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the *Riddle Box* album called “3 Rings.” Now, we’ve always liked to put that song on the show tape in a position where we know we need to catch our breath, because it’s a sing-along song — the crowd sings the whole lyrics of the first verse: “Ring one, a dung a dung dung/

My name’s Violent J and I staple my tongue/

To the desk in school then I run down the hall/

Scaring the shit out of all y’all, bitch-es...” And we would just hold the mics out and catch our breath while everybody sings it, right? So we put that song on our show — and nobody sang it. Nobody! We couldn’t believe it. It’s like they haven’t found that one yet. They haven’t reached the *Riddle Box* album, which many of our old fans consider the best work we ever did. But nothing from *Riddle Box* has really popped off on TikTok and all that yet, right? It’s been all [*The Great Milenko*] and stuff after that. So when we go to that song, they don’t know it. And you hear a few people singing it, but nothing like it used to be. And it’s just wild, man, because it’s a different group of people coming out, mixed in with the classic people. It’s a wild time, brother.

Metro Times: It’s like the TikTok kids all intermingling with Vinnie the ICP Kid. You get the old and the new, and then everybody’s just chilling together.

Violent J: They are chilling together, and that’s what’s important, because everybody that’s down with the clown came aboard at some point. Everybody was new to it at some point, and how they found it don’t matter. They all were told about it by a friend, or they discovered it on TikTok, whatever. They all came aboard the wagon in their own way, and everybody was new at some point. It don’t fucking matter if they’re new today or if they’ve been down 20 years. Nobody is more superior than anybody else, because what matters to me is that once they’re down, they stay down. They look at this as a good time in their life. They don’t say, “Oh, I used to listen to that bullshit.” I want them to appreciate our music as a good time in their life when they discovered it. That’s, to me, what really defines a true juggalo, instead of people that grow out of shit. I’m not saying they got to remain their number one fan all their life, but I don’t like it when people say, “Oh, I used to love the Beastie Boys, but they suck now.” The Beastie Boys never changed. You changed! Your taste in music changed. Because you used to love that album. Now you don’t like it. That’s you that changed. That album didn’t change.

Metro Times: I remember my cousin gave me *Riddle Box* on tape on our way



Violent J enjoys some Faygo, juggalo-style.

JOSH JUSTICE

down to Cedar Point one year. And right when it came out, that blew my mind. So I was hooked instantly.

Violent J: Dope. See, everybody gets on board at some point, you know? And nobody is more important than anybody else. As long as they’re down, they’re all part of the family. That’s how I feel.

Metro Times: You guys released *The Naught* this year at the 25th Annual Gathering of the Juggalos. This is your rounding out the second Joker’s Cards deck with *The Naught*. How was that going into that album compared to writing all the other albums?

Violent J: A lot different, brother. A lot. That album literally means nothing — literally. It means “nothing.” The first six Joker’s Cards ended with the choice of Heaven and Hell — it ended with *Shangri-La* and it ended with *Hell’s Pit*, two different albums. They were both the sixth Joker’s Cards. The whole “Dark Carnival” mythology, or whatever it is, is about having faith. Believing there’s something after death. There’s more to this. There’s something on the other side. That’s the whole idea of the Dark Carnival, and believing in that, believing there’s a better place where the

good-hearted are rewarded and the bad-hearted — depends on what you believe. Some believe they get punished. I don’t necessarily believe that. I just myself believe they cease to exist. They don’t get to go to the beyond.

But *The Naught* is for the other people that have no faith. They don’t believe in an afterlife of any sort. They don’t believe in any type of religion or anything like that. And that’s really the basis of what the entire Dark Carnival is.

So this is what you got: You got three sets of cards coming out, right? The first six cards came out, it ended with *Shangri-La* and *Hell’s Pit*. The second six cards came out now. It ended with *The Naught*, which is for atheists, for non-believers. The third deck is next.

And there’s only going to be five. There’s not going to be six cards. There’s only going to be five, because that sixth card is potentially our death, for real.

You know what I’m saying? Because we’re getting older.

Metro Times: Don’t say that, man.

Violent J: Well, you know, it’s just a fact. We’re getting older. For people that have been around the entire ride, we’re getting older. And we have to answer that

question ourselves. Where do we want to see our souls end up? That’s your sixth Joker’s Card. When the listener or us in this situation, or any situation, when we pass, where do we want to go? So there is no actual sixth Joker’s Card. Plus, that would be 666, and 665 has a totally different meaning. It adds up to 17, which has been the juggalo number from day one. And it means a lot. You know, 665 means a lot in juggalo mythology.

So when we went into *The Naught*, how do you represent an album that means nothing? We just went in. We just threw it together, brother. We just threw it together. It actually came out better than we thought, because it actually came out pretty good, but there’s nothing on it that is meaningful. There’s nothing on it that is memorable to me.

Metro Times: I don’t know — that last track you guys did [“WHILE IT LASTS”], your own version of “Africa” by Toto? If you’re saying that that album means nothing and all those bangers that you guys put on there, like, I’m going to respectfully disagree because that was a great album.

Violent J: Thank you, man. It came out better than we thought, but there’s a lot missing from that album, though. A lot of the ingredients we put into our Joker’s Cards, we didn’t bother because ... basically these were just songs.

OK, put it like this: We have EPs sometimes between our albums ... like [*Beverly Kills 50187*] or *Tunnel of Love*. ... or *The Terror Wheel*. Those albums, those EPs, are just collections of cool songs. This album, *The Naught*, is almost like a full album, a version of that. They’re just songs, they’re great songs. They’re fun. They’re entertaining. That’s it. But there’s no deep meaning to them. There’s no message to them. There’s nothing we’re trying to relay. There’s nothing. It’s just songs. It’s just us rapping over dope beats and having fun or boasting, talking shit.

There’s no message in *The Naught*. Because we don’t really have anything to say to people that don’t believe in a faith. We don’t really have anything to say except provide them with entertainment.

And there are some messages on there like the last song [“WHILE IT LASTS”], it’s saying, “Enjoy it while it lasts.” Because if you don’t believe in an afterlife, enjoy this now. And the opening song is [“THE NAUGHT”]. It’s saying, “For you, all of this amounts to nothing. Everything you did in your life means nothing.” Because if you believe in nothing, what’s it all matter, anyway? What does any of this matter? Even if you’re the G.O.A.T., even if you’re the greatest of all time, when they shut that box, that coffin, what the fuck does that matter? You’re not there to celebrate it.

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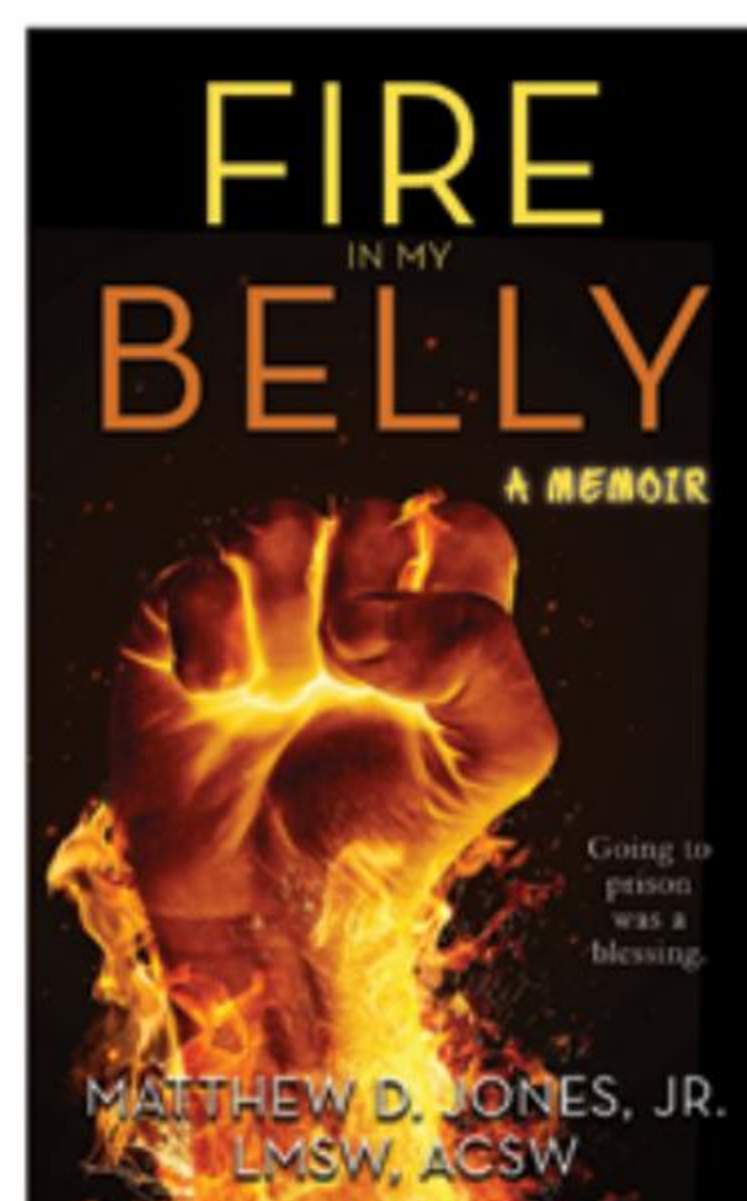
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Juggalos get drenched in Faygo at an ICP concert.

JOSH JUSTICE

You're nothing. So there are messages, but they're blunt. They're just saying for you, nothing — this all means nothing.

We each get a choice of what we want to believe in in life. I'm not mad at atheists or anything like that. I don't have any specific religions. Maybe I'm an atheist. I don't know. I don't really know how religion works. I just know I believe in an afterlife. I believe my mom is somewhere better than this. I believe in my soul. And I know there's enough paranormal type shit going on in this world to prove damn near that there's more to this story. There's enough ghost shit going on to know that there is a beyond.

Metro Times: It doesn't have the same hopefulness that "Pass Me By" or "The Unveiling" and all that has. It's the anti that — it's kind of like a purgatory for you guys.

Violent J: It is, and it's just saying it's entertaining. It's not a shitty album. It's a good album, but it's not uplifting. It's not — it's just what it is. And that's what we set out for it to be, with literally no fear of what the backlash was going to be. Even when you look at the [album liner notes] booklet, you flip through

the pages — it just says nothing. Every page says "nothing" in another language. It doesn't even say anything in there. Because it all amounts to nothing if you don't have any faith. Faith is a powerful thing, brother. Just the will of believing will help people get through life so much better. Believing that it's going to get better. Having faith is an important fucking thing, man. Without faith, people's lives would be terrible. A lot more people would suffer, man. Without faith, when you lose a loved one or something, it'd be so much more painful without having faith that they're in a better place. And that's just how we feel.

Metro Times: And you're a big subscriber to *The Secret* too, right? I read that book too — you know, manifesting and getting what you want, believing in yourself. Even without the book, that's always been your guys' motto and credo, too — you guys have to do it for you.

Violent J: I know it without a shadow of a doubt it's real. I've always known that ICP would be OK. I've always known that the day we leave this earth, our band will be more successful than it's ever been. I've always known that. It's never anything I ever worried about. I

always known my kids would be OK. I never thought we'd be broke and fucked up in the end and nobody would care. I always knew in my heart that, and I still know in my heart, that ICP is OK because even if some sort of scandal broke out or something, I know that we're good people. So there's nothing we have to worry about being uncovered or something getting out. There's nothing, there's no worry. And so I've always known that we'll be OK. It's just going to be more and more people discovering our shit and appreciating it for what it is. And if it's not your thing, like most of the world, it's not your thing.

Metro Times: You're taking Juggalo Championship Wrestling with you to almost every stop. You guys got a hell of a lineup on some of these stops. You got James Storm, and 2 Tuff Tony, and Vampiro, and Suicide, and all kinds of guys.

Violent J: JCW is my passion, brother. That's my passion project. That's my fucking whole M.O. right now. JCW has always been for juggalos, by juggalos. It's been a product to entertain juggalos. But now I want to show the world how good we've gotten at it. And now I want it to be juggalos showing the world how

bomb ass of a wrestling product, a wrestling show, we can do. I want to show everybody how these juggalos get down because most of our roster is made up of actual juggalos, and I want to show the world how good these juggalos are at writing wrestling storylines and putting on these matches and keeping it engaging. And that's our goal today. Ever since we started *Lunacy*, the goal is to break that image of this is just for juggalos. We want it to be for every wrestling fan. We want to show them how dope our shit actually is.

Metro Times: You guys got your home-grown talent, like 2 Tuff Tony. And then you're getting these national stars like Nick Namath ... I feel like there's a huge amount of respect for what you guys do, because you guys are former wrestlers, current wrestlers yourselves, that you guys respect the business. You're not just promoters trying to hustle.

Violent J: We're getting there, man. We're getting that respect. But what we're about to do, what we got planned now, is really about to flip the whole company up on its head. The thing we're kicking into right now on this tour, man, we have been setting this up for months



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and months and months. And we finally got it all worked out and all lined up. And our show *Lunacy*, which has been on for about a year, maybe 15, 16 months now, every week on YouTube, Thursday nights at seven o'clock, is about to fucking kick into overdrive big time. We're really excited. It's like we're putting all our marbles in this shit. We're mashing the gas now. We're about to drive this bitch right off the cliff. And I'm really excited about it. We're going to really flip a lot of wigs, man.

Metro Times: It's some of the most talented people on the scene right now getting into your squared circle.
Violent J: It's my greatest joy right now. Doing JCW is my greatest joy right now — beside my kids. My kids will always be my greatest joy. But aside from that, doing JCW is the funnest thing I do in my life — watching the show, writing these storylines.

And the crazy thing is, if you look back in the book I wrote years ago, and if you look in this book we just came out with called *Unaccepted*, it shows our whole history of wrestling. Me and Shaggy, we were doing backyard wrestling when I was 14 and he was 11 and we were writing wrestling storylines, running a backyard wrestling promotion. So this is literally something I've done my entire life. Even before I was an adult, we took it serious in the backyard. We took it serious. We would go to a Holiday Inn and rent the banquet room and pass out flyers everywhere and put gym mats out and run a show at the Holiday Inn just so we had a venue. I have a shitload of experience. This is my greatest joy aside from my kids.

Metro Times: A bit of a step up from stealing railroad ties and garden hoses. Like you guys have a legit ring.

Violent J: That's right. We can afford a ring now, a real one.

Metro Times: So this tour that you guys are venturing out on winds up in Detroit on Halloween for your 32nd annual Halloweened. What kind of surprises do you have in store for that?

Violent J: Literally just before I did this interview, we figured out the lineup, 'cause we always bring a special show to Detroit. We got some dope shit coming, man. This is going to be a big Halloweened this year. I'm excited to see the people that are on the lineup myself. And just yesterday we landed some festivals. It's fun to get booked on these festivals, and we landed two of them and we're excited about it. So it's been a productive week, man.

Metro Times: I caught you guys at Bonnaroo down in Tennessee and you

guys were the last big band to play before it all got canceled [due to rain]. And that was crazy.

Violent J: They should have known, man. We're going to shut that shit down every time.

Metro Times: Even talking with the other photographers and the media people there, there was so much buzz about you guys in the media tent. Everybody was scrambling. I think you guys had maybe like 20 photographers down in that photo pit, just fighting for jockeying for position to get pictures of you guys.

Violent J: Man, we did a festival at the end of our last tour, just like a month ago in Louisville. And it was an ocean of people out there. And in the pit between us and the fans on the bottom of the stage, there was all photographers. And when we opened the Faygo, they would just run. They would just run. They look like cattle running, or bulls running to get away from the Faygo.

Metro Times: There were all these expensive cameras. Luckily I had a couple extra ponchos that I handed out to them so that way they would be protected. They didn't know what they were in for.

So what do you guys have your eyes set on for after Halloweened?

Violent J: We're going to put together a tour. It's going to be a dope ass tour. It's not going to be ICP though. It's going to be "Psychopathic Records Presents." And we're talking about just now. ... We want to put a big juggalo party on tour together this winter, and do it through possibly December, but definitely January, 'cause ICP don't really tour in the winter. We don't like to tour in the winter because you send everybody out in fucking clothes all wet [from Faygo] and the freezing weather and all that. So we stopped doing that probably 15, 10 years ago. But we're going to put together something fun for juggalos to do if they want to, and also use it to film our *Lunacy* episodes.

Metro Times: I forgot to mention, Halloweened will be streaming live on veeeps.com for 20 bucks. That is a steal for all those that can't get to the Masonic Temple in downtown Detroit.

Violent J: Can't beat that. ... Last year we came out as Super Mario brothers. This year we got that beat. I think our new costumes are going to beat that. So it's a challenge. We wanted to do something cooler than that. I think we did it. ... It's going to be cool, man. **MT**

Insane Clown Posse's 32nd annual Halloweened starts at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 31; Masonic Temple, 500 Temple St., Detroit; axs.com. Tickets start at \$78.

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FEATURE



This year, Youmacon will send winners of its cosplay competition to a summit in Hiroshima.

JAE HOTALING

Big in Japan

Detroit's Youmacon convention marks 20th anniversary with cosplay and community

By Lee DeVito

Now celebrating its 20th year, Detroit's Youmacon convention brings thousands of anime and pop culture fans to Huntington Place for celebrity guests, vendors, musical performances, and more — but the highlight is always the cosplay, or fans who dress up as their favorite characters, often by handcrafting their own intricate and creative costumes.

Emily Wallin-Kale, who leads Youmacon's cosplay department, says the trend has become bigger than ever, and spent much of the year prepping for the event by lining up corporate sponsors.

"We literally start in January," she says. "Me and my team, we start reaching out to different companies to see if they'd be willing to do prize sponsorships. ... Once we start rolling, it's like a snowball. It keeps getting bigger and bigger."

This year, Wallin-Kale says Youmacon is offering some \$7,000 worth of prizes, many of which are aimed to appeal to cosplayers. Those include gift cards for Art of Wigs, tights and leotard retailer We Love Colors, The Foamery (which specializes in foam and other materials for cosplay), decal company Siser North America, and Bernette sewing machines, among others.

"I remember when I was competing in this region several years ago, I was always glad to receive my \$25 gift card or whatever," Wallin-Kale says. "I was always happy to get that because it helps you plan for the next one."

She adds, "I love giving this stuff out every year, seeing the look on peoples' faces when they come up to get their awards. It's rewarding."

Wallin-Kale says the corporate

support is a sign of how far cosplay has come over the past 10-20 years, exploding in popularity as anime, manga, and video games have as well.

"It's definitely growing," she says, recalling attending sewing expos around 2013 as a cosplayer. "People just thought it was so weird, like, 'Why are you wearing costumes? What are these costumes for?' Because these conventions were filled with quilt ladies who thought the future of sewing is just people who make quilts."

She adds, "There's a whole world of crazy apparel and stuff to make out there. We are so glad that companies are finally buying in."

This year's event also includes "make-and-take" cosplay workshops sponsored by Bernette and other brands, where attendees can learn to make their own costumes and have

something to show for it. Since spaces are limited, attendees should purchase tickets and register for classes ahead of time on Youmacon's website.

"It's going to be a really great opportunity for people who want to get their hands on a machine in a class setting and get the feel for what it's like to create," Wallin-Kale says, adding, "I've wanted to do this for years, and it was finally in the cards and it just kind of all fell into place."

Wallin-Kale first attended Youmacon in 2007, and has led the cosplay department since 2018. As a cosplayer, she has represented the United States three times in international cosplay competitions and says she loves to help bring up the next generation of cosplayers.

"I am so happy to do it," she says. "It's honestly such a rewarding way to give back."

The Integrated Cosplay Contest at this year's Youmacon will send winners to compete in Spain and Portugal. And for the first time this year, it will also send cosplayers to Hiroshima, though the Japanese event is less of a competition and more of a "miniature world cosplay summit," she says.

"It's a fellowship event," she says. "You get to meet other cosplayers and make friends, but there's no pressure. You do perform, but there's no awards. It's just the experience of it."

Wallin-Kale says one thing she loves about cosplay is its ability to bring people together and even transcend borders.

She recalls attending her first international event, Clara Cow's Cosplay Cup, in the Netherlands, and found a community eager to share resources to help each other with last-minute costume fixes.

"It's wonderful, honestly, the opportunities to go and meet people who come from other perspectives and other cultures, but you all understand each other," she says.

This year, Wallin-Kale plans to dress up as Hatsune Miku, an anime pop star from Japan known for her teal pigtails. It's a lot of scrambling ahead of time to prepare for the big event, but she says it's worth it once you in costume surrounded by other fans.

"It's a privilege to be a part of this community," she says. **MT**

Youmacon runs from 5-10 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 30; 10 a.m.-1 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 31; 10 a.m.-1 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 1; and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 2. Huntington Place is located at 1 Washington Blvd., Detroit. Tickets start at \$75 and are available to purchase at youmacon.com.



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WHAT'S GOING ON

Halloween at The Station

Here's one for the little ones — Ford is hosting a Halloween party at its newly renovated Michigan Central Station. Festivities include “trunk-or-treating” outside of the station (out of decorated Ford vehicles, naturally) and other hands-on activities for children like mask-making and face-painting. Indoors is a special Halloween-themed edition of its Friday at The Station performance series with DJ Dez Andrés, DJ Cisco, Gabriel Duran, and Motor City Street Dance Academy. It should be a great way to experience the historic train station-turned-community hub if you have not done so yet. Oh — and there will be cider and doughnuts, too.

From 5-10 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 31; Michigan Central, 2001 15th St., Detroit; michigancentral.com. No cover.

Graveyard Shift

And for the adults, there's this Halloween DJ night at Northern Lights Lounge headlined by Marcellus Pittman, one of the biggest names in Detroit house music who is known for his outside-of-the-box sets. Costumes are encouraged for the monster mash, with a stacked lineup including DJ Etta, Duck Trash, DR. Disko Dust, MGUN, Ryan Spencer, Scott Zacharias, and Todd Modes.

Starts at 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 31; Northern Lights Lounge, 660 W. Baltimore St., Detroit; ra.co. Tickets are \$28.55 advance, \$34.30 day of show.

VANTA

Detroit artist and musician Stacey MacLeod is known for fronting the local band Dear Darkness, whose posters feature her black-and-white visual art style. Her artwork will be on display in *VANTA*, a one-night-only exhibition of new ink draw-

ings as part of Motor City Brew's long-running Wednesday Night Art Series. The show takes its name from Vantablack, a coating known as “the blackest black,” and the artwork reflects MacLeod's fascination with the intensity and balance of light and dark. “My high-contrast drawings explore black as a kind

of darkness and a representation of gothic sophistication,” MacLeod says in a statement. “The markings are strange shadows, crooked lines, and forms that melt and merge. I want witnesses of my art to celebrate the power of a composition that is strangely distorted, and yet, somehow, impossibly balanced — such



Artwork by Stacey MacLeod.

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as is the night with the day, matter with void, life with death — black and white.”

From 7-10 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 5; Motor City Brewing Works, 470 W. Canfield, Detroit; motorcitybeer.com. No cover.

The Collective: The Jazz Experience

The Collective, a hub for small businesses and entrepreneurs on

Detroit’s west side, is launching a new jazz series featuring singer Sky Covington and November Fourth. “The Collective has been doing great things for the city,” Covington said in a statement. “Now we’re adding to that energy — bringing the sound of jazz to one of Detroit’s most historic corners, where something special is emerging.” The series kicks off with a three-night residency, including a VIP Sneak Peek Soirée on Thursday, Nov. 6.

From 7:30-10 p.m. from Thursday,

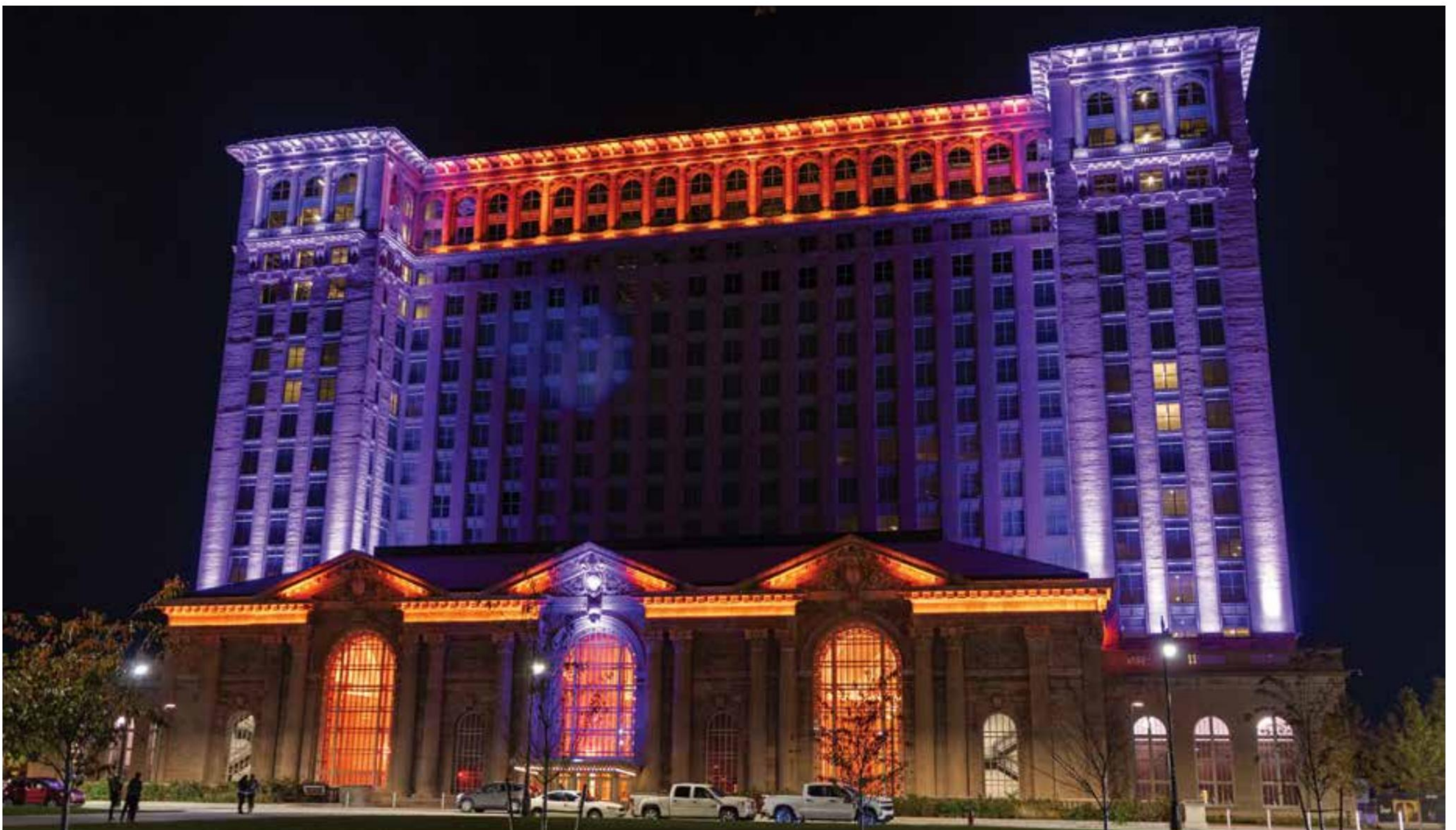
Nov. 6-Saturday, Nov. 8; The Collective, 15400 Grand River Ave., Detroit (2nd floor); eventbrite.com. Tickets are two for \$30.

Book talk: Wrecked

This November marks the 50th anniversary of the infamous shipwreck of the *SS Edmund Fitzgerald*, which sank in Lake Superior during a wind storm, killing its entire crew of 29 men. In his recently published book, *Wrecked: The Edmund Fitzgerald*

and the Sinking of the American Economy (Michigan University Press), author Thomas Nelson argues the tragedy wasn’t only the result of a natural disaster but is inextricably linked to the decline of industrial manufacturing in the Midwest, exploring the effects on the families of the survivors to this day.

Starts at 11 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 7; Dossin Great Lakes Museum, 100 Strand Dr., Detroit (Belle Isle); detroithistorical.org. Admission is \$5. MT



Michigan Central Station.

COURTESY PHOTO

T COUNT

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WHAT'S GOING ON CONT'D

Select events happening in metro Detroit this week. Be sure to check venue websites before all events for the latest information. Add your event to our online calendar: metrotimes.com/AddEvent.

THEATER

Performance

Fisher Theatre - Detroit Dungeons and Dragons: The Twenty Sided Tavern (8 and Over) Saturday Nov. 1, 2 & 7:30 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts HYPROV: Improv Under Hypnosis Saturday Nov. 8, 8 pm.

Fox Theatre Sesame Street Live! Sunday Nov. 9, 2 & 6 pm.; Sunday Nov. 9, 2 & 6 pm.; Sunday Nov. 9, 2 pm.

Hilberry Gateway - STAGE Seven Guitars Set in Pittsburgh's Hill District in 1948, Seven Guitars by August Wilson follows a group of friends mourning the sudden death of Floyd "Schoolboy" Barton, a blues guitarist on the verge of stardom. The play explores ambition, systemic injustice, and the search for legacy through live music and lyrical dialogue. As Floyd and Hedley chase dreams in a world built to oppress Black aspirations, the American Century Cycle play reveals the enduring bonds that hold communities together. \$15-\$25 Friday 7:30-10:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 1, 2-5 & 7:30-10:30 pm, Wednesday Nov. 5, 2-5 pm, Thursday Nov. 6, 7-10 pm, Friday Nov. 7, 7:30-10:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 8, 2-5 & 7:30-10:30 pm and Sunday Nov. 9, 3-6 pm.

Meadow Brook Theatre Catch Me If You Can (Play) Wednesday 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday 7:30 pm, Friday 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 1, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday Nov. 2, 2 pm.

Pronto! Royal Oak Rag Dolls Season 4 | Drag Competition Group B Rag Dolls Season 4: Group B Group B of Rag Dolls Season 4 takes over Pronto! every other week with dazzling performances, outrageous humor, and queens who refuse to play it safe. Each show brings new energy, fresh twists, and drag artistry that keeps the audience on its feet. Come experience Group B as they light up the stage with charisma, creativity, and unfiltered talent. This isn't just another drag show—it's a bi-weekly showcase of the next wave of drag stars. \$4 Cover Every other Thursday, 9:30-11:59 pm.

Musical

Detroit Opera House Back to the Future the Musical (Touring) - Recommended for ages 6 and up Wednesday

7:30 pm, Thursday 7:30 pm, Friday 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 1, 2 & 7:30 pm, Sunday Nov. 2, 1 & 6:30 pm, Tuesday Nov. 4, 7:30 pm, Wednesday Nov. 5, 7:30 pm, Thursday Nov. 6, 7:30 pm, Friday Nov. 7, 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 8, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday Nov. 9, 1 & 6:30 pm.; Wednesday 7:30 pm, Thursday 7:30 pm, Friday 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 1, 7:30 pm, Sunday Nov. 2, 1 & 6:30 pm, Tuesday Nov. 4, 7:30 pm, Wednesday Nov. 5, 7:30 pm, Thursday Nov. 6, 7:30 pm, Friday Nov. 7, 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 8, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday Nov. 9, 1 & 6:30 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre for the Performing Arts Wicked (The Movie) Thursday 6:30 pm.

Meadow Brook Theatre Catch Me If You Can Wednesday 2 & 7:30 pm, Thursday 7:30 pm, Friday 7:30 pm, Saturday Nov. 1, 2 & 7:30 pm and Sunday Nov. 2, 2 pm.

The Music Hall Lord of The Rings - The Hobbit: The Concert \$34.90-\$84.90 Tuesday Nov. 11, 4 pm.

Players Guild of Dearborn She Loves Me Set in a 1930s European perfumery, workplace rivals Amalia and Georg each find solace in a secret pen pal they met through a "lonely hearts" ad. As their anonymous correspondence deepens, so does the tension between them in real life. This play has inspired several adaptations, including the classic films The Shop Around the Corner (1940) and In the Good Old Summertime (1949), as well as the 1998 film You've Got Mail. Performances: November 7-9, 14-16, & 21-23, 2025 Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m., Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Friday Nov. 7, 8 pm, Saturday Nov. 8, 8 pm and Sunday Nov. 9, 2:30 pm.

COMEDY

Improv

Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest The Dinner Detective True Crime Murder Mystery Dinner Show - Ann Arbor, MI Solve a hilarious true crime murder mystery while you feast on a fantastic dinner. Just beware! The culprit is hiding in plain sight somewhere in the room, and you may find yourself as a Prime Suspect before you know it! \$79.39 Saturday Nov. 8, 6:30-9 pm.

Embassy Suites Troy The Dinner Detective True Crime Murder Mystery Dinner Show - Troy, MI Solve a hilarious true crime murder mystery while you feast on a fantastic dinner. Just beware! The culprit is hiding in plain sight some-

where in the room, and you may find yourself as a Prime Suspect before you know it! \$79.39 Saturday Nov. 1, 6:30-9:30 pm.

Flagstar Strand Theatre For The Performing of Arts HYPROV Live Starring Colin Mochrie & Asad Mecci — Nov. 8 at the Flagstar Strand Theatre HYPROV: Improv Under Hypnosis takes the stage at the Flagstar Strand Theatre on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 8 p.m. Featuring Whose Line Is It Anyway? star Colin Mochrie and master hypnotist Asad Mecci, this hilarious hybrid of hypnosis and improv comedy turns audience volunteers into instant performers. Each show begins with a live hypnosis session, followed by unpredictable, laugh-out-loud improv games that guarantee no two nights are ever the same. Created by two masters of their crafts, HYPROV delivers a one-of-a-kind, mind-bending comedy experience. Tickets start at \$37, with Spooky Savings—use code SPOOKY by Oct. 22 for \$10 off! \$37 Saturday Nov. 8, 8 pm.

Go Comedy! Improv Theater Pandemonia The Allstar Showdown is a highly interactive improvised game show. With suggestions from the audience, our two teams will battle for your laughs. The Showdown is like "Whose Line is it Anyway," featuring a series of short improv games, challenges and more. Fridays and Saturdays 7:30pm & 9:30pm 25.00 Fridays, Saturdays.; \$20 Every other Friday, 8 & 10 pm.

Stand-up Opening

Caesars Palace Windsor - Augustus Ballroom Jo Koy and Friends Saturday Nov. 8, 8 pm.

Diamondback Music Hall Comedy Extravaganza Feat. Tony Rock & Trey Elliot Thursday Nov. 6, 7 pm.

Fraser Lions Club 11th Annual MomWouldBeSoProud Comedy Event—Continuing to Bring Sunshine 1 Smile at a Time Sparkle Network's 11th Annual #MomWouldBeSoProud comedy show to benefit the Alzheimer's/Dementia Family Fund will be held at Fraser Lions Club in Fraser Nov. 8 doors open at 7 pm with showtime of 8 pm. This fund was created based on Dementia/Alzheimer's journey the organization's founder saw with her own mom & seeing the need for offering direction and some monetary help to families who find themselves in this journey, as well. This year's lineup includes fan favorites Paolo Busignani and Mike Geeter along with Moe Lietz as the MC. Attendees must be 21 or older.

\$35 single/\$65 couple/\$300 table of 8 Saturday Nov. 8, 7 am-11 pm.

Little Caesars Arena Matt Rife: Stay Golden Tour \$39.50-\$149.50 Saturday Nov. 8, 8 pm.

Magic Stick Welcome To Night Vale: Murder Night in Blood Forest Friday 7 pm.

Morenas Event Venue Soulful Sounds in Detroit Detroit, get ready for a vintage-inspired evening of Music & Comedy with a modern twist <ox1F399><ox1F602> Catch Acute Inflections live on October 29th! <ox1F3AB> \$35.00 Wednesday 7-9 pm.

Sound Board Lil Rel Howery Wednesday 8 pm.

Continuing This Week Stand-up

Blind Pig Blind Pig Comedy FREE Mondays, 8 pm.

The Independent Comedy Club at Planet Ant The Sh*t Show Open Mic: Every Friday & Saturday at The Independent A weekly open mic featuring both local amateurs and touring professionals. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. and the show begins at 9 pm.. The evening always ends with karaoke in the attached Ghost Light Bar! Doors and Sign up 8:30 p.m. Show at 9 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. Attached bar Ghost Light opens at 7 p.m. \$5 Suggested Donation Thursdays, 9-10:30 pm.; A late night, heckle encouraged, show up, go up stand-up open mic featuring both local amateurs and touring professionals. Sign up starts at 10:30 and the show begins at 11p. Doors and Sign Up 10:30p | Show at 11p | \$5 Suggested Donation* Attached bar Ghost Light opens at 7p The independent Comedy Club is a comedy club run by comics for comics inside Planet Ant Theatre. The club runs Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, offering independently produced comedy shows from 8p-12a. Presented by Planet Ant *Planet Ant Theatre, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit organization; no ticket or reservation is required \$5 Suggested Donation Fridays, Saturdays, 11 pm-1:30 am.

DANCE

Dance performance Opening

The Music Hall ABT Studio Company Sunday Nov. 9, 3 pm.

Dance lessons

Continuing This Week Dance lessons

The Commons Ballroom Dance Lessons Ballroom Dance lessons in the community laundry mat 5.00 first Friday of every month, 6-7 pm.

Meadow Brook Theatre Catch Me If You Can (Play) 2 & 7:30 pm. **MT**

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FOOD

Romanian bistro Bar Gabi is now serving in Hazel Park

A new restaurant concept with a focus on Romanian cuisine is now serving in Hazel Park's former Framebar space.

Led by Romanian-American husband-and-wife chef duo Gabriel and Gabriela Botezan, Bar Gabi officially launched last week.

"Opening Bar Gabi for me and my wife, it's our longtime dream basically coming true," Gabriel said in a statement. "This means everything to us because we finally find ourselves opening the restaurant that we always dreamed to have — to showcase our culture and showcase our food, our passion."

"This is about sharing who we are," added Gabriela. "Romanian food is almost overlooked in America. We want to showcase our food and hospitality at the level it deserves, and to highlight it and celebrate



Hazel Park's Bar Gabi focuses on Romanian cuisine.

MARK KURLYANDCHIK / BOOTH ONE CREATIVE

it more."

Gabriel will oversee the main menu, while Gabriela is in charge of breads and desserts. The two were born in Romania but met in the Detroit area and have honed their craft working at local Italian restaurants including Southfield's former

Bacco Ristorante and downtown's Adelina.

Bar Gabi's menu includes the Botezan's takes on Romanian dishes, including a breaded Tomahawk Schnitzel bone-in pork chop with smoked paprika and mustard greens, Transylvanian Goulash, the "Vaca Moo" steak with Hungarian peppers and hand-cut fries, rotating pastas, and more.

For dessert are items like Romanian Cremes, Albinita honey cake, and tiramisu.

The cocktail program is led by Ken-

neth Laatz, also of Adelina, and includes non-alcoholic options. The space was designed by Colin Tury and includes framed embroidery from the Botezans' family in Romania.

The adjacent former Frame space is available for booking for private parties, and Bar Gabi says it plans to eventually host special events like chef collaborations there.

Bar Gabi is located at 23839 John R Rd., Hazel Park.

—Lee DeVito

Bombfire opens in Liquor Basket Gratiot

The Liquor Basket Gratiot, a combination liquor store and art gallery on Detroit's east side, has expanded its offerings with a new grab-and-go restaurant.

Named Bombfire, the endeavor is led by chef Chucky Payton and his wife Felisa. In 2022, the couple moved from Los Angeles to Detroit, where Felisa's family is from.

Felisa says "Chef Chucky," as he is known, comes to Detroit with more than 15 years of experience, including operating pop-ups and working in catering. In addition to Bombfire, he also runs catering businesses in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas.

"We consider it comfort gourmet food," Felisa says of Bombfire, adding, "What my husband brings to the table is really different from a lot of the other chefs."

The Bombfire menu includes items like tacos, quesadillas, pita wraps, and salads, in addition to dishes like plantain nachos and pesto fries. The dishes are served with comfort food sides like mac and cheese and candied yams, along with made-from-scratch hummus and a signature house-made barbecue jerk sauce.

A \$5 breakfast menu includes

French toast, pancakes with house-made Chicken fennel sausage, a breakfast burrito, and a sandwich.

The kitchen is open Thursdays through Saturdays and is also available to order from via the DoorDash app. (On Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, Chef Kevin serves up Louisiana Creole fare.)

Felisa says Bombfire plans to partner with the Liquor Basket Gratiot to provide food for its art shows and other events.

The Liquor Basket is located at 3643 Gratiot Ave. next to the old Faygo factory, and drew attention in recent years after Detroit artist Dominick Lemonious, whose family owns the store, decided to start hosting art exhibitions inside the space. The gallery formally rebranded as the Push Gallery earlier this year.

Aside from art, the liquor store aims to promote Black-owned brands like Uncle Nearest whiskey and Anteel tequila.

"We got healthy food, Black-owned products, and art that's expressing people that look just like us," Lemonious previously told *Metro Times*, adding, "It's a space where people are comfortable." —Lee DeVito

Bev's Bagels collaborates with local chefs

Detroit's newest bagel

shop is collaborating with a revolving door of some of the hottest local chefs.

Its new "Bagels with Buds" series will see Bev's Bagels team up with big names in Detroit's dining scene for a special monthly one-day guest menu. The series launches on Oct. 30 with Mexican-inspired items by Carlos Parisi of Aunt Nee's chips and salsa, including a Mexican chocolate and spiced pumpkin twist bagel with marzipan schmear, a chorizo and muenster bialy with salsa verde, and shrimp ceviche on a sesame bagel tostada.

"At Bev's I always want to keep pushing the envelope beyond the traditional and into a more creative realm," owner Max Sussman said in a statement. "So it made a lot of sense to invite other chefs with their own perspectives, backgrounds, and ingredients into our kitchen to create new flavors you won't find anywhere else. We want to celebrate the culinary cultures

that are right here in Detroit."

Other upcoming collabs include Ji Hye Kim of Ann Arbor's Miss Kim and Little Kim, Ima's Mike Ransom, Takoi's Brad Greenhill, Mabel Gray's James Rigato, Leña's Mike Conrad, Molly Mitchell of Rose's Fine Foods, and John Yelinek of chef of Ladder 4 Wine Bar, among others.

Born in Mexico City, Parisi is a Detroit dining scene booster and one of the organizers of the annual Detroit Sandwich Party event.

"Detroit is a city that has thrived in the national eye because of collaboration, small business, and community," Parisi said. "This is everything to me, and I'm so happy to be working with Max, who has carried this thought with him in every step."

Bev's Bagels opened earlier this year in the former Detroit Institute of Bagels space in Core City at 4883 Grand River Ave.

—Lee DeVito



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At least the *Nine Inch Nails* score is excellent.

DISNEY

Film

Jared Leto almost ruins *Tron: Ares*

By Jared Rasic, Last Word Features

The *Tron* franchise is interesting. The original from 1982 is groundbreaking when it comes to film-making and special effects, but it didn't do that well critically or financially. At the time, Disney had to write off most of the budget, and the film was seen as a failure (except by Roger Ebert!). Over the next decade-plus, the film became a cult-classic for nerds like me in love with the effects and the strange beauty of the world.

After 18 years, Disney decided *Tron* has enough of a following to not only make a legacy sequel, but to position it as their company's answer to *Star Wars*. Thus, we got *Tron: Legacy* in 2010, a decent movie that made around \$400 million for the *Tron* brand, but was still seen as a disappointment by Disney, which hoped it would cross a billion. Same story, different movie: the movie was forgotten almost immediately after release and then slowly over the last 15 years has built up enough of a cult following that Disney is ready to dust off the old arcade cabinet and tap back into The Grid.

In rewatching *Tron* and *Tron: Legacy*

in preparation for the release of *Tron: Ares*, I learned a few things about the franchise, always enhanced by rose-colored nostalgia glasses for me. First, the original *Tron*'s actual plot is secondary to the effects. If the revolutionary computer effects and world-building weren't there, no one would really care about Jeff Bridges's mission to regain ownership over a video game he invented. The film is actually pretty dull, with Bridges doing his best to energize a fairly mellow story.

Tron: Legacy does a good job expanding the scope of the world and has a ton of exciting action and sci-fi shenanigans, but is completely hobbled in 2025 by the de-aged version of Jeff Bridges, who serves as the villain of the film. The character looks so AI and phony that (especially when standing next to the REAL Jeff Bridges) it grinds the movie to a halt whenever it shows up.

But *Tron: Legacy* had one thing that really elevated the film into cult classic territory: The score by Daft Punk is an all-timer — so propulsive and intense that it carries the movie through even

some of its worst moments. Even if you have zero interest in ever watching a *Tron* movie, listen to the score from *Tron: Legacy* and create your own version in your imagination.

Now, we have *Tron: Ares*, fresh with many of those same lessons from the previous *Tron* movies learned and unlearned. Obviously, the effects are incredible with astonishing production design, cinematography, and action sequences. This was always going to be a given. Director Joachim Rønning really does some awe-inspiring stuff with the camera that always manages to keep the film interesting to look at, even when the pedestrian story falters along the way.

My biggest problem with *Tron: Ares* is something that might not bother anyone else, but I'll bring it up anyway: Jared Leto doesn't know how to modulate a performance. It seems like he's way more concerned with making an impression than creating a character that fits in the world he's a part of. His Joker is cartoonish without any subtext, his performance in *House of Gucci* is garish and worthy of *SNL*,

and his work in *Ares* is like he googled being "subtle" and pulled off "sleepy" instead." He's not a consistent performer, and in roles like this, *Blade Runner 2049* and *Morbius*, he actively makes the films worse.

Luckily, the one thing Disney retained from *Legacy* is finding a brilliant band to provide an omnipresent and transporting score and dialing into it with intensity and gusto. Nine Inch Nails' score for *Tron: Ares* isn't just one of the best of the year, but will be in the conversation for GOAT. It held me rapt, watching every single frame, even as the story (about AI, freedom, and other trite conventions) bored the hell out of me. I hope *Tron: Ares* is watched by millions of people, not as an extension of another Disney franchise or a Jared Leto vehicle, but as the most expensive NIN music video ever made.

I couldn't tell you half of the plot points or story ideas in *Ares*, but as a visual ride, it's pretty incredible. If you just want two hours of NIN elevating film scores into another stratosphere while you're watching the insanely layered imagery, then look no further. Think of it like *Koyaanisqatsi*, but with 100 percent more Leto. Gummies were invented for *Tron: Ares*. Do with that what you will.

Grade: A- or a C+, I have no idea. 

Adult Entertainment

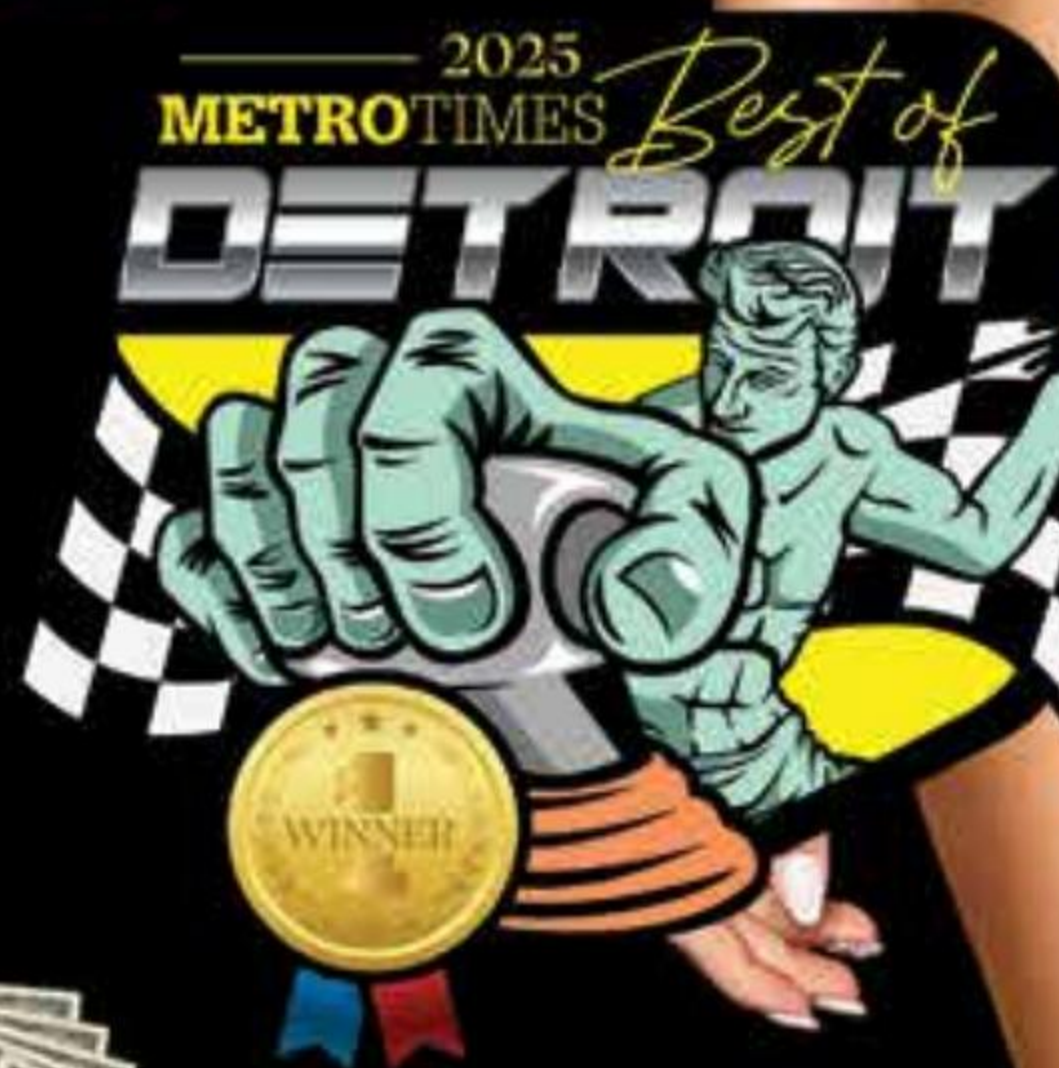

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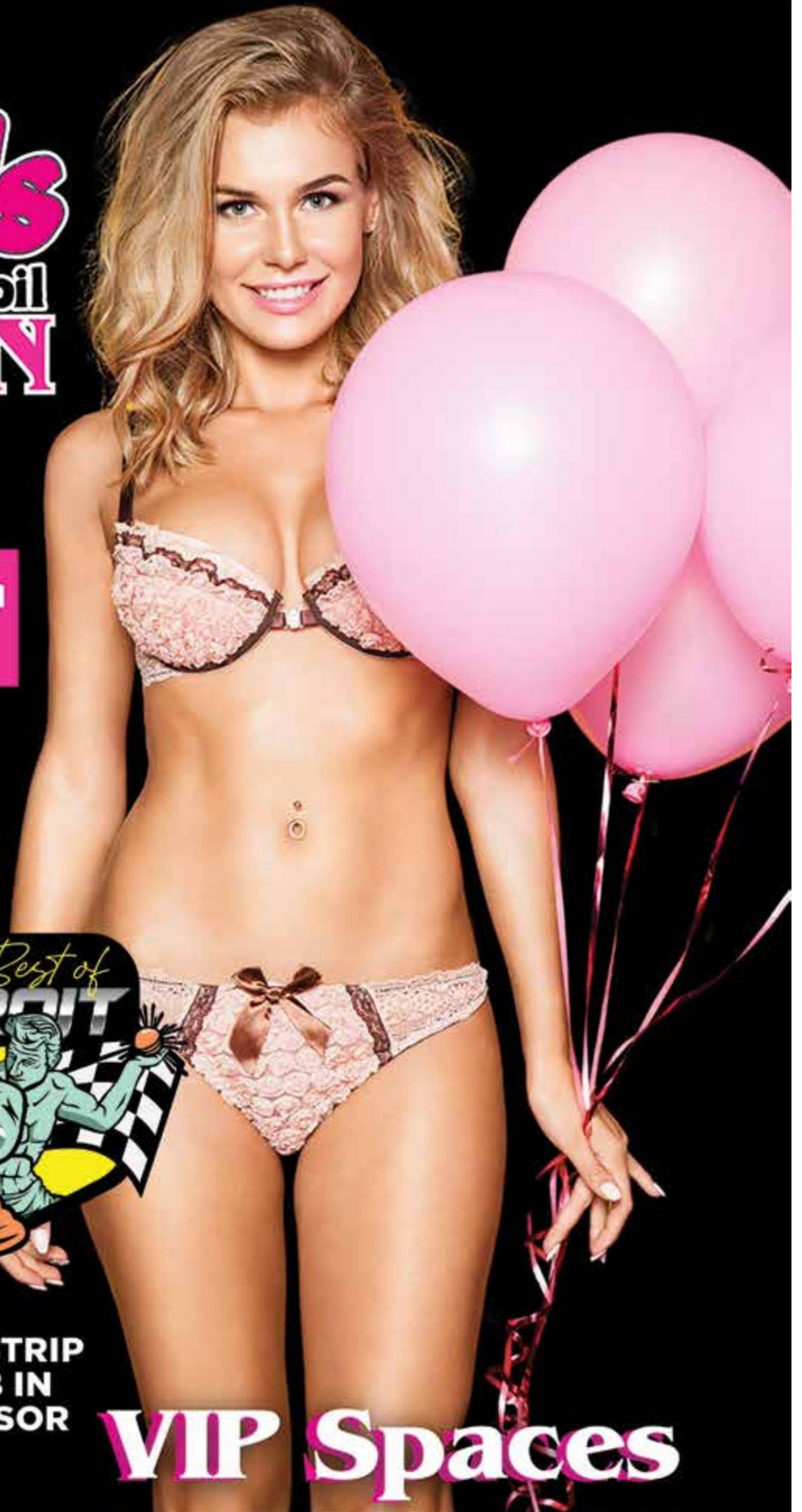
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The Straight Dope

Proposed cannabis caps could hurt consumers and small cities

By Steve Neavling

After delivering a serious blow to Michigan's already struggling cannabis industry by imposing a 24% wholesale tax, state lawmakers are now trying to make amends with a set of bills aimed at limiting competition in the oversaturated market.

Democrats who control the state Senate introduced a set of bills on Oct. 2 that would impose limits on new dispensaries and eliminate new large cultivation licenses.

While the legislation would benefit many established businesses, it would hurt consumers and smaller cities like Hazel Park and Ferndale by reducing tax revenue, eliminating cannabis jobs, and paving the way for regional monopolies, according to state analyses obtained by *Metro Times*.

Senate Bill 597, introduced by state Sens. Sam Singh, D-East Lansing, and Jeremy Moss, D-Southfield, would limit each municipality to one dispensary for every 10,000 residents. If approved, the legislation would prevent the state Cannabis Regulatory Agency (CRA) from approving new dispensary licenses in municipalities that already exceed the limit. Municipalities with fewer than 10,000 residents would be limited to one retail license.

The bill wouldn't force existing dispensaries to close, but once one shuts down, it couldn't be replaced until the municipality falls below the cap.

On Oct. 15, the Senate Regulatory Affairs Committee voted 11-0 in favor of the bill that would cap new dispensaries.

The caps would defy the voter-approved initiative that legalized recreational marijuana in Michigan in 2018 and called for unlimited cannabis licenses.

When voters approved recreational cannabis in 2018, the ballot initiative called for unlimited business licenses. So any change to the initiative would require a three-quarter supermajority in the Senate and House.

While many in the industry support



Rush Cannabis is one of 10 dispensaries in Hazel Park. A new proposal would limit the city to one.

STEVE NEAVLING

the legislation, it threatens smaller cities like Hazel Park (pop. 19,431), Ferndale (pop. 15,064), and Inkster (pop. 25,108), which have become cannabis hubs and rely on the tax revenue. Hazel Park has 10 dispensaries, Ferndale has six, and Inkster has seven, according to CRA records. The new legislation would limit Hazel Park and Ferndale to one dispensary each and Inkster to two.

Cash-strapped municipalities have come to rely on cannabis revenue. With a 10% excise tax on recreational cannabis sales, hundreds of millions of dollars have gone to local governments, schools, and roads since 2020.

Municipalities shared nearly \$100 million from excise taxes collected last year, according to the Michigan Department of Treasury. For each dispensary within their boundaries, cities and townships receive more than \$58,000 annually.

This year, Hazel Park received \$582,300, a major source of revenue for a city with rapidly rising pension obligations. Without that money, the city "would have had to make cuts in services or pass those costs on to taxpayers," Hazel Park City Manager Edward Klobucher

told *Metro Times* in 2024.

Ferndale received \$349,400 in excise tax revenue, and Inkster collected \$407,600.

An Oct. 13 analysis by the Senate Fiscal Agency warns that a cap on licenses will harm small cities and towns and "create regional monopolies or oligopolies preventing new businesses from entering the marijuana market."

The agency points out that larger cities like Detroit have not yet reached their dispensary limit, but smaller municipalities have. In Detroit, which has a population of 645,705, there are 61 active dispensary licenses. The city's cap would be 64.

"If small cities and villages were prevented from increasing the number of dispensaries while larger cities were not, there would be a shift of payments from small towns to larger cities," the report states.

The legislation would also bar new large cultivation licenses that permit operators to grow as many as 2,000 plants.

The bills came in response to a new 24% wholesale tax that will be slapped on the struggling cannabis industry begin-

ning on Jan. 1. With no feedback from the industry or consumers, the House approved the bill 78-21 in late September, and the Senate narrowly approved the tax 19-17 after cannabis business owners spoke out. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed the tax into law on Oct. 7.

Hours later, the Michigan Cannabis Industry Association filed a lawsuit against the state, alleging the Senate lacked the three-quarters supermajority required to change a voter-approved initiative. Voters agreed to a 10% excise tax and 6% sales tax on retail cannabis sales. Any new or higher tax, the association contends, amounts to an amendment of the ballot measure and therefore needs a supermajority vote.

Records obtained by *Metro Times* show lawmakers knew the increase was going to harm the industry and ultimately lead to a drop in excise taxes. On Sept. 26, a day after the House approved the tax hike with no public input, the Michigan Department of Treasury estimated the new tax will shrink the wholesale market by 14%.

By the state's own estimates, lawmakers are harming cities that have em-

braced cannabis legalization and leaving consumers with higher prices and fewer choices.

At the same time, cannabis businesses are struggling to hang on in an industry that has more product than it can sell. Prices have plummeted, and sales continue to decline this year. Profit margins are razor thin, and many businesses have closed or are on the cusp of calling it quits.

Reducing competition would control oversupply and help existing businesses survive in a tough, competitive, and expensive industry, advocates say.

At a Senate Regulatory Affairs Committee meeting on Oct. 15, Moss blamed the wholesale tax vote on House Speaker Matt Hall, R-Richland Township.

“He said he would shut down the government if the 24% didn’t pass,” Moss said.

Moss pledged the Senate would “demonstrate in good faith that we are serious about listening to the industry,” which he said was “struggling with too many operators both in the grow and retail space, leading to unprofitability of product.”

Robin Schneider, executive director of the Michigan Cannabis Industry Association, which represents more than 400 cannabis businesses, told the committee that her organization supports the limit on new dispensaries and large-scale cultivation licenses. She said the surplus of marijuana has created “stockpiles of cannabis that are currently sitting in facilities, rapidly losing value across the state.”

“Unlimited cultivation licenses have created oversupply, causing wholesale prices to plummet, financially harming businesses all the way down the supply chain,” Schneider told the committee. “As we’ve seen in other states, unlimited cannabis production in the license market leads to failing businesses and sometimes diversion of product into the illicit market, and that puts our entire program at risk of federal noncompliance.”

But not all cannabis operators support the cap on licenses. At Alien Tech Farms, a relatively new grower of high-quality cannabis in Vassar, a small city of 2,727 located outside of Flint, the goal was to eventually open a dispensary. But Vassar already has more than one dispensary for every 10,000 residents, so opening one there would be impossible if the cap is passed.

“This would effectively freeze us all out from vertically integrating or expanding,” Alien Tech Farms owner Steve Wagner said. “That would be pretty tough. ... It’s now feeling like we can’t go anywhere.”

He added, “The little guys are seemingly stomped on.”

It’s not yet clear if lawmakers can round up enough votes for a supermajority to approve the bills. **MT**



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Savage Love

Full Spectrum

By Dan Savage

Q: *I'm the parent of a 14-year-old boy who is on the autism spectrum. Recently, I discovered that he has been searching online for some niche sexual material. Because of his autism, he tends to hyper-fixate on things, and I'm concerned about what might happen if I ignore this. Could it affect his future sexual development or limit him in unhealthy ways? At the same time, I don't want to shame him or handle it poorly. My questions are: Should I address this directly with him, and if so, how? What are the risks of leaving it unaddressed? How can I support him in developing a healthy relationship with sexuality, even if dating or relationships aren't a priority for him? Any advice you can share would be greatly appreciated.*
—**Headed Down The Rabbit Hole**

A: “We live in an age where social media informs and often defines younger generations’ understanding and experience of themselves and the world around them,” said Elana Himmelfarb, an autism spectrum consultant. “Sexuality is part of identity, and HDTRH’s son — like all young people — deserves an intentional, calm, fact-based and supportive approach to this new phase of his personal development.”

So, the following advice goes out to anyone parenting a teenager, HDTRH, not just to parents of autistic teenagers.

“The most important thing is creating a climate where there is shared language and a safety zone that allows for open discussions and questions without shame or fear of judgment,” said Himmelfarb. “A calm approach, planned discussions, teachable moments, and checking in creates an atmosphere that enables teens to connect meaningfully as they navigate the waters of sexual identity, preference, choice, and safety.”

To create the best possible climate for these kinds of conversations, a parent needs to take their own child’s personality into account.

“Some teens respond well to

humor, others to facts; some are brimming with questions, and others are deer in the headlights,” said Himmelfarb. “And before parents rush in with tons of information and questions, they need to let their child know — in a way that is sensitive to their child’s individual personality — that sexuality is a topic that it’s okay to discuss, that they won’t push or invade their child’s privacy, and that there’s no such thing as a dumb question.”

Due to your son’s unique issues — he’s a young teen, he’s on the spectrum, and he’s seeking out niche materials — there is, of course, more on your plate and more for you to consider, HDTRH.

“The role autism plays will depend on your child’s neurodevelopment,” said Himmelfarb. “Understanding how he regulates his attention and expresses himself is key. Can he identify and verbalize his emotions and thoughts? If there are other mental health issues — anxiety, panic, obsessive/compulsive behaviors, past trauma, etc. — those will need to be factored in to avoid overwhelming him and to keep dysregulation at bay.”

As for those niche sexual materials he’s been seeking online...

“Is there a self-regulation aspect to his seeking?” asked Himmelfarb. “Are sensory sensitivities and preferences at play?”

Your son, like other teenagers, may intentionally be seeking out materials online that are strange or shocking — for the thrill of the shock (for the sensation), and not because the materials arouse him sexually.

“It is also important to understand his level of self-advocacy,” said Himmelfarb. “Is he someone who is comfortable saying and accepting ‘no,’ setting boundaries, and pivoting if one’s mind changes? There will be significant work to be done if these areas are weak. And it helps to anchor abstract concepts like consent and accountability with scenarios and examples. Movie clips are great way to start those conversations.

This scene from *Swingers* is great — it talks about what *not* to do when asking a girl out — and while I’m not personally a fan of *Love on the Spectrum*, which can be problematic, watching it together can be a great way to open up a discussion.”

Returning now to those niche sexual materials...

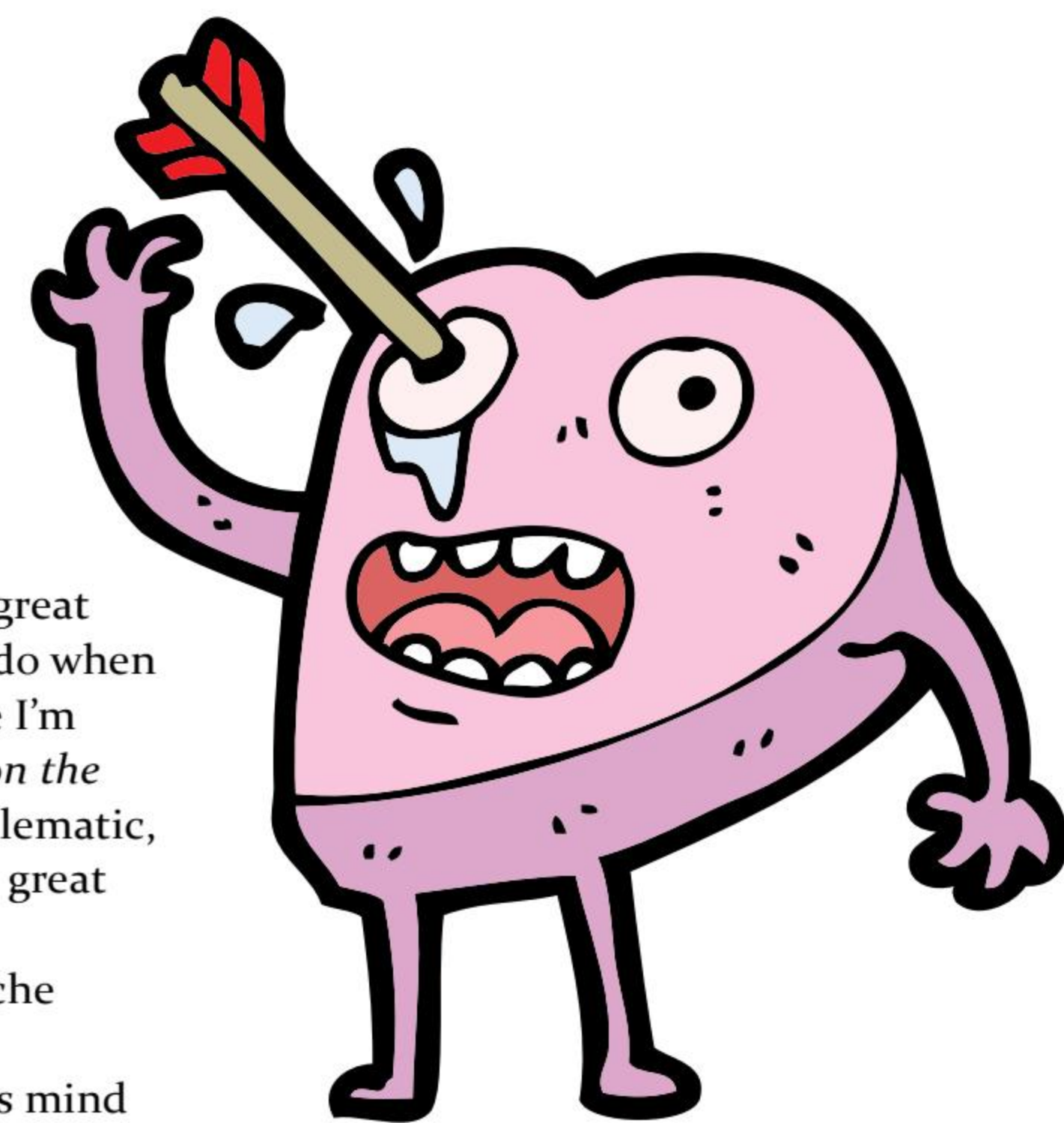
“Understandably, HDTRH’s mind goes straight to the ‘niche’ themes and his son’s tendency to hyper-fixate,” said Himmelfarb. “But you don’t want to go straight for the problem areas until there is shared language and an established rapport.”

Instead of bringing up exactly what you saw in his browser history, Himmelfarb recommends zooming out and having a conversation that will help you figure out what your son might already know.

“He should ask his son to define — without looking them up — some key terms that you know will be coming into play: sexual identity, sexual preference, fetish, consent, LGBTQ+, etc.,” said Himmelfarb. “Over time you can pivot to some of the areas of deeper concern — those ‘niche’ interests — so you can help him understand them, catch whether this is a misguided attempt to meet a need that could be better met in a different way, or if there are safety concerns.”

You’ve seen the porn your son is looking at, RHB, and we haven’t, which means you have a better sense of whether there are safety concerns. But it’s important to remember, as a parent, that there’s a difference between “niche” sexual interests/obsessions that don’t make sense to us but are essentially harmless — like being sexually obsessed with Pokémon — and sexual interests or obsessions that are legitimately alarming. If your son is obsessed with images of women in rubber swim caps, HDTRH, you can probably relax; a series of conversations that emphasizes the importance of boundaries and consent and acknowledges the existence of kink may be all he needs. But if your son obsessed with violent kinks and/or non-consensual scenarios, HDTRH, you’re gonna have to burst through the wall like the Kool-Aid man and speak bluntly about his kinks and the risk they might — to himself and others — if he were to ever act on them.

Another concern often raised



by parents who’ve stumbled over evidence that their kids aren’t gonna be vanilla when they grow up is that kinks make it harder to find partners. While it’s true that niche sexual interests can complicate a person’s search for a partner, not everyone with a kink wants to act on it — some people want to explore their kinks solo — and other kinky people wind up with GGG partners who don’t share their kinks but are happy to indulge them. And if there’s a large enough group of people who are into a given kink, a kinky kid often does — once that kinky kid is a kinky grownup — winds up finding their partner *and* their tribe as a result of their kink.

“I suggest taking a deep breath, acknowledging your own biases, managing your anxiety, and tamping down a sense of urgency as you step forward into this phase of your child’s identity and world-view formation,” said Himmelfarb. “Have fun with it, use appropriate humor, be sensitive to privacy and timing. Reflect on your own sexual development and sexual story. Talk to other teen parents. And remember there are lots of professionals to seek guidance and support from.”

P.S. Himmelfarb sent along some suggested resources — places to start — for autistic teenagers and their parents: Wrong Planet is a web community for people with Autism (and other neurological differences), their parents, and professionals who work with them; the Autistic Self Advocacy Network has an entire section of their website dedicated to sex education; for kids with a million questions — kids who fixate — Himmelfarb recommends Go Ask Alice!, a sex-and-health Q&A site with extensive archives.

Elana Himmelfarb, MA LLC, is an autism spectrum specialist, a neurodiversity advocate, a career and educational consultant, and a sexual-

ity educator. There is more about her work — and more resources — at her website: www.elanahimmelfarb.com.

Q: I am a married cis gay man living in the Midwest. I recently got a prescription from my doctor for Viagra. I'm a bottom who enjoys being fingered and fucked, but occasionally I lose my erection during sex if my dick isn't also getting enough stimulation. This never bothered me too much — bottoms in porn are often not fully erect during an entire scene — but it causes my husband to question whether I enjoy sex with him, and he worries he isn't "doing it right." This caused me stress during sex — worrying about maintaining my erection and kept me from enjoying the fingering/fucking that he was doing — but when I take Viagra, I'm able to relax and enjoy sex more because I don't have that anxiety in the back of my head.

My question is: do I have to tell my husband about the Viagra? Normally I wouldn't keep medical information from him and generally he doesn't like me keeping "secrets." But I worry that if I tell him about the meds, it will ruin the illusion, and he'll go back to questioning his performance and adequacy. Of course, there is the chance he'll find out anyway if he finds the bottle or pharmacy papers and looks up what "sildenafil" is, but generally he doesn't go through my things so that's mostly unlikely. (Sildenafil is the generic version of the drug I'm using.) What would you do, Dan? —**Midwest Erection Dysfunction Sufferer**

A: I would leave the bottle where my husband could find it. But if your husband rarely goes through your stuff and is unlikely to find your boner pills — and equally unlikely to google "sildenafil" if he were to find them — you can keep this "secret" to yourself. If your dick being soft (or going soft) when he's fucking you makes your husband feel insecure for no good reason (because you enjoy being fucked!) and his insecurities are ruining PIB for both of you (anticipatory stress about staying hard doesn't make getting or staying hard easier!), discreetly popping a Viagra is a nice thing to do. You aren't "keeping a secret," MEDS, you're doing a little behind-the-scenes prep that makes anal sex

better for you both. You probably don't announce to your husband that you douched — nor do you announce how many squats you did at the gym this week to keep your ass in fuckable shape — and in the same spirit, MEDS, you aren't obligated to announce that you popped a boner pill. Sometimes sparing is caring.

But you asked what I would do: If finding out I'd been taking boner pills would make my husband's insecurities worse and if he was likely to find them and if the discovery would open up a new front in this conflict ("You lied to me — with your dick!"), MEDS, I would hold on to the first bottle of pills, keep it nearly full, and leave it someplace my husband was likely to find it. So, if I had a prescription for 40 pills, I would make sure the original bottle always had 38 pills in it. (They always give you more Viagra than you need, so when I got the prescription refilled, I would top up the original bottle with new pills, toss the new bottle, and keep the rest of my boner pills someplace my husband would never find them.) And then, MEDS, when my husband found the bottle and had a meltdown about it, I would point to the date of the original prescription on the bottle and then show him the bottle was still nearly full. "Yes, I got a prescription — I was starting to worry about my dick — but I only took two pills in the year since I got them, honey, and then I forgot they were even in here."

Just make sure your real stash — the pills you're actually taking — are someplace your husband would never look. I'd put mine in the dishwasher.

P.S. Or you could level with him: "Honey, the douching and squats and how quickly I put my ankles over your shoulder should be all evidence you need that I love it when you fuck me. And not everyone stays hard when they get fucked — when we're fucking, it's not about my dick, it's about yours — but if you want me hard every time you fuck me, you can pretend I'm not taking boner pills just like you pretend that's my pussy." **MT**

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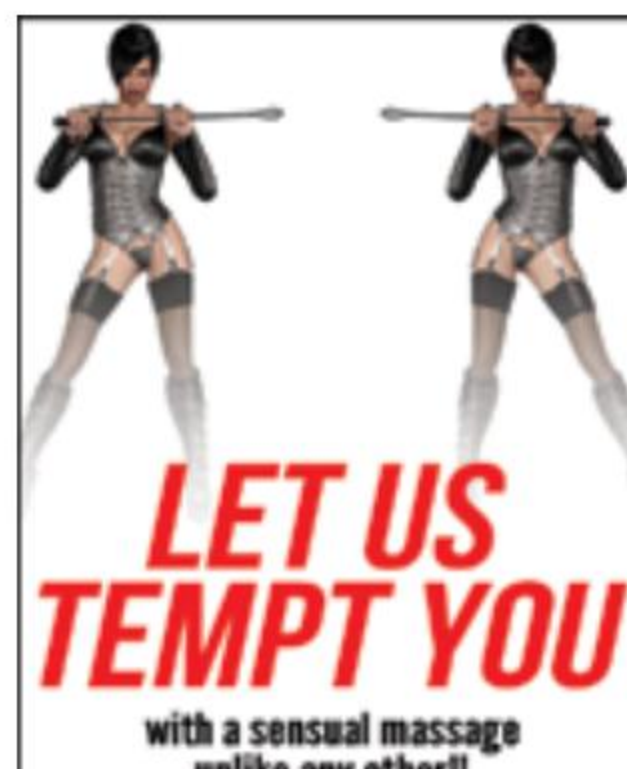
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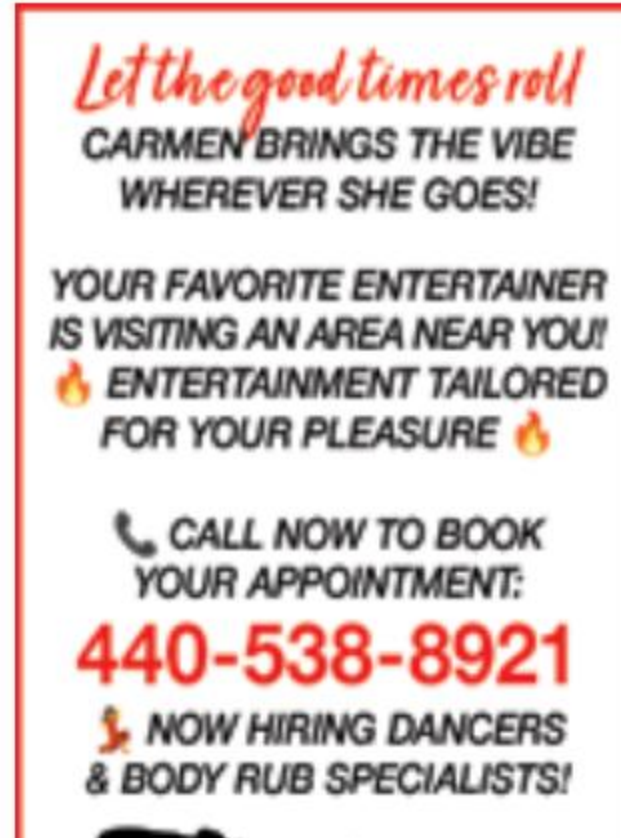
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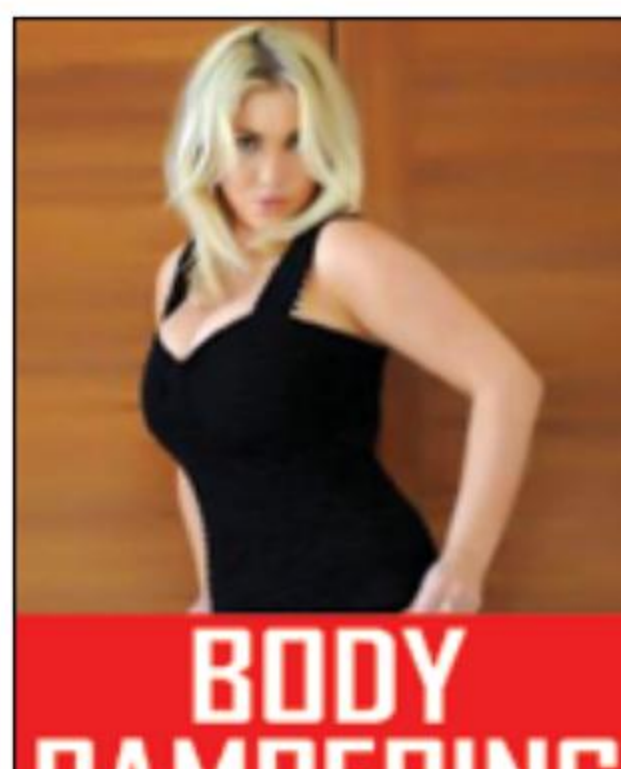
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Free Will Astrology

By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES: March 21 – April 19
On the outskirts of a village in Ghana, a healer gathers plants only when the moon says yes. She speaks the names of each leaf aloud, as if to ask permission, and never picks more than needed. She trusts that each herb has its own wisdom that she can learn from. I invite you to emulate her approach, Aries. Now is a good time to search for resources you need to heal and thrive. The best approach is to be receptive to what life brings you, and approach with reverence and gratitude. Halloween costume suggestion: herbalist, traditional healer, sacred botanist.

♉ TAURUS: April 20 – May 20
A well-cut ship's sail is not a flat sheet. It has a gentle curve that the sailmaker crafts stitch by stitch so the wind will catch and convert invisible pressure into forward motion. Too taut, and the cloth flaps, wasting energy; too loose, and power dissipates. The miracle lies in geometry tuned to an unseen current. I invite you to be inspired by this approach, Taurus. Build curvature into your plans so that optimism isn't an afterthought but a structural feature. Calibrate your approaches to natural processes so movement arises from alignment rather than brute effort. Make sure your progress is fueled by what you love and trust. Halloween costume suggestion: Wear a sail.

♊ GEMINI: May 21 – June 20
All of us can benefit from regular phases of purification: periods when we dedicate ourselves to cleansing, shedding, and simplifying. During these intense times of self-healing, we might check our integrity levels to see if they remain high. We can atone for mistakes, scrub away messy karma, and dismantle wasteful habits. Here's another essential practice: disconnecting ourselves from influences that lower our energy and demean our soul. The coming weeks will be a perfect time to engage in these therapeutic pleasures, Gemini. Halloween costume suggestion: purifier, rejuvenator, cleanser, refiner.

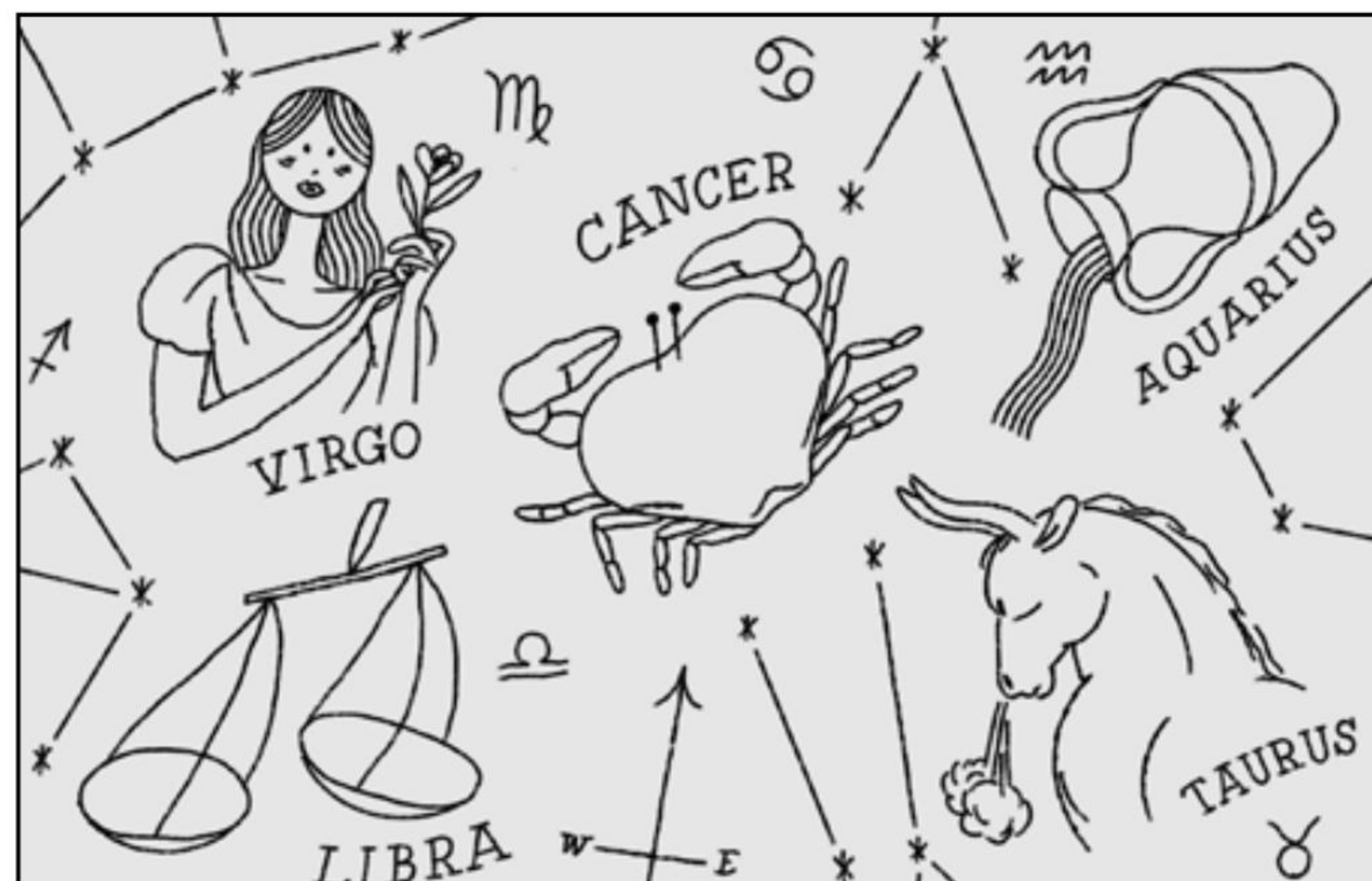
♊ CANCER: June 21 – July 22
Deep in the Pacific Ocean, male humpback whales sing the longest, slowest, most intricate love songs ever. Their bass tones are loud and strong, sometimes traveling for miles before reaching their intended recipients. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to compose and unleash your own ul-

timated love songs, Cancerian. Your emotional intelligence is peaking, and your passionate intensity is extra refined and attractive. Meditate on the specific nature of the gifts you want to offer and receive in return. Halloween costume suggestion: singer of love songs.

♌ LEO: July 23 – August 22
Between 1680 and 1725, Italy's Antonio Stradivari and his family made legendary violins that are highly valued today. They selected alpine spruce trees and Balkan maple, seasoned the wood for years, and laid varnish in painstaking layers that produced sublime resonance. Their genius craftsmanship can be summed up as the cumulative magic of meticulousness over time. I recommend their approach to you, Leo. Be in service to the long game. Commune with people, tools, and commitments that age well. Act on the theory that beautiful tone is perfected in layers. Halloween costume suggestion: a fine craftsman.

♍ VIRGO: August 23 – Sept. 22
Trained women dancers in Rajasthan, India, perform the ancient art of *bhavai*. As folk music plays, they balance on the dull edge of a sword and hold up to 20 clay pots on their head. They sway with elegance and artistry, demonstrating an ultimate embodiment of "grace under pressure." I don't foresee challenges as demanding as that for you, Virgo. But I suspect you will have the poise and focus to accomplish the metaphorical equivalents of such a feat. Halloween costume suggestion: regal acrobat or nimble dancer.

♎ LIBRA: Sept. 23 – Oct. 22
In 1968, researchers at Stanford conducted the "marshmallow test." Children were offered a single sweet treat immediately. But if they didn't quickly gobble down the marshmallow, thus postponing their gratification, they were awarded with two candies later. The kids who held out for the double reward didn't do so by sheer willpower alone. Rather, they found clever ways to distract themselves to make the wait more bearable: making up games, focusing their attention elsewhere, and adjusting their surroundings. I advise you to learn from their approach, Libra. Cultivate forbearance and poise without dimming your passion. Harness small triumphs of willpower into generating big, long-term gains. Diligent, focused effort invested now will almost certainly lead to satisfying outcomes. So please



JAMES NOELLERT

prioritize incremental, systematic grunt work over stunts and adrenaline. Halloween costume trick: carry two marshmallows.

♏ SCORPIO: Oct. 23 – Nov. 21:
In the late 18th century, Balloonomania came to Paris. Large crowds gathered to watch inventors and impresarios send hot air balloons into the sky. Spectators were astonished, fearful, and filled with wonder. Some wept, and some fainted. I suspect you're due for your own exhilarating lift-off, Scorpio—a surge of inspiration that may bewilder a few witnesses but will delight those with open minds. Halloween costume prop: wings.

♐ SAGITTARIUS: Nov. 22 – Dec. 21
In Don't be too shocked by my unusual list of raw materials that might soon turn out to be valuable: grime, muck, scuzz, scum, slop, bilge, slime, and glop. Amazingly, this stuff may conceal treasures or could be converted into unexpected building materials. So I dare you to dive in and explore the disguised bounty. Proceed on the assumption that you will find things you can use when you distrust first impressions and probe beneath surfaces. Halloween costume suggestions: sacred janitor, recycling wizard, garbage genius.

♑ CAPRICORN: Dec. 22 – Jan. 19
In the tidepools of America's Pacific Northwest lives the ochre starfish, a keystone species that keeps mussel populations in check. Remove the starfish, and the ecosystem collapses into imbalance. Let's make this creature your power symbol, Capricorn. The visible effect of your presence may not be flashy or vivid, but you will hold a stabilizing role in a group, project, or relationship. Your quiet influence can keep things harmonious. Your gift is not

to dominate the scene, but to keep the whole system alive and diverse. Halloween costume suggestion: ochre starfish (More info: tinyurl.com/OchreStarfish).

♒ AQUARIUS: Jan. 20 – Feb. 18
For hundreds of years, the Blackfoot people of North America built buffalo jumps. These were steep cliffs where herds of bison could be guided and driven over the edge during a hunt. It required elaborate cooperation. Scouts tracked the herd, decoys lured them toward the drop, and prep teams waited below to process the meat, hides, and bones for the whole community's sustenance. I hope you will engage in smaller versions of this project. Now is an excellent time to initiate, inspire, and foster shared efforts. Make it a high priority to work with allies you trust. Halloween costume suggestions: shepherd, sheep dog, cowboy, vaquero.

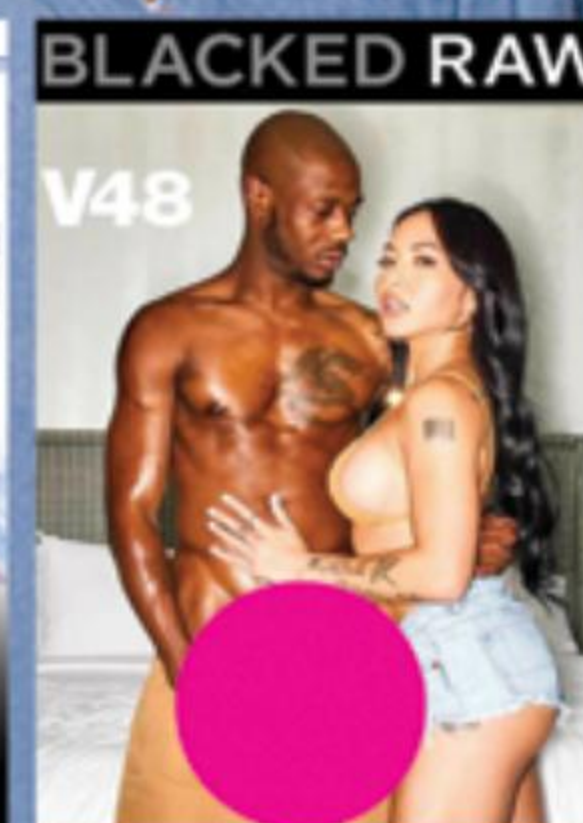
♓ PISCES: Feb. 19 – March 20
In the ancient Greek world, oracles spoke in riddles. This was not because they were coy, but because they understood that truth must often arrive obliquely. Directness is overrated when the soul is in motion. Mythic modes of perception don't obey the laws of logic. In this spirit, Pisces, I invite you to make riddles and ambiguities be your allies. A dream, an overheard conversation, or a misheard lyric may contain an enigmatic but pithy code. You should be alert for messages that arrive sideways and upside down. Tilt your head. Read between the flames. You will understand when your heart recognizes what your mind can't name. Halloween costume suggestion: oracle or fortune-teller. **MT**

Homework: This Halloween, maybe pretend to be your secret self.

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